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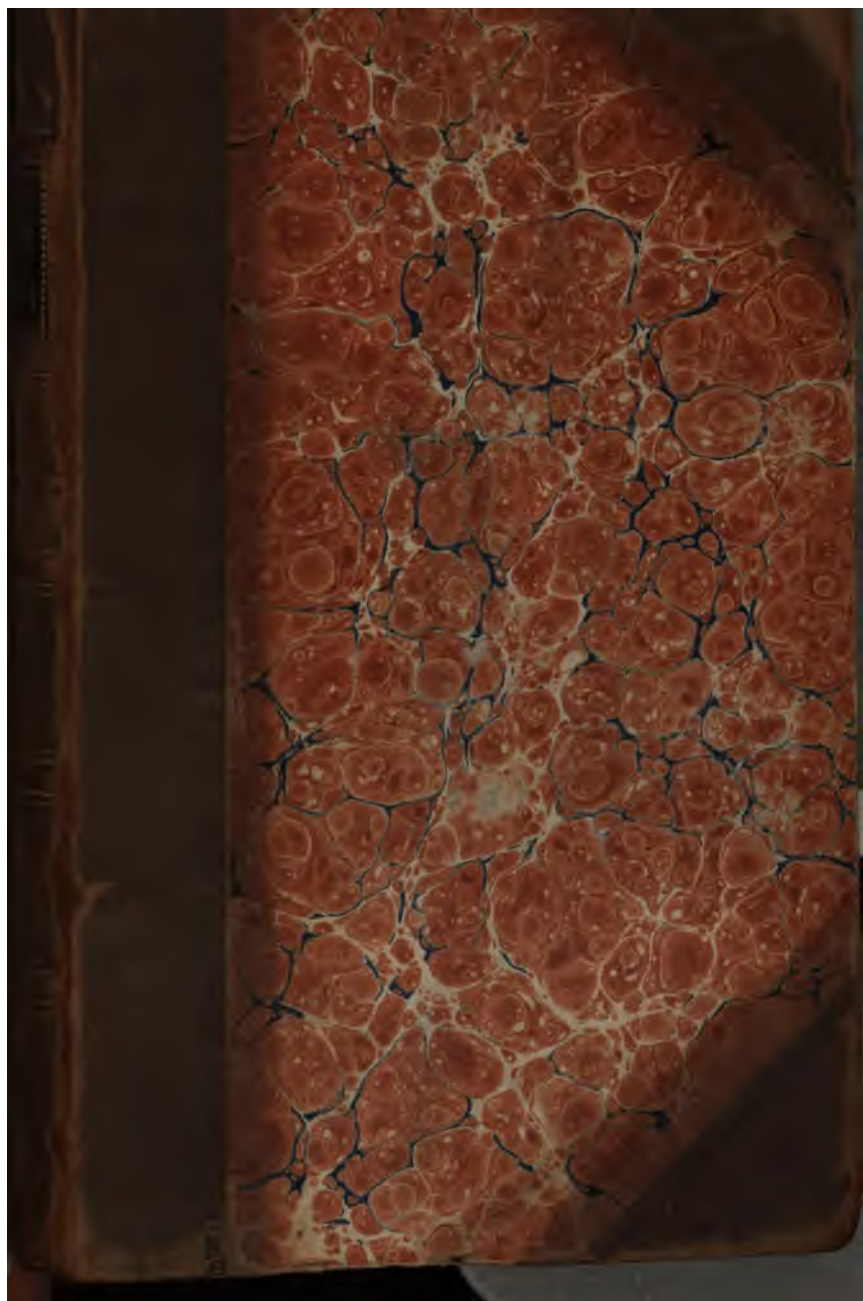
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**BREAD OF THE FIRST FRUITS.**



SEELYS, WESTON GREEN, THAMES DITTON.

# BREAD OF THE FIRST FRUITS :

2 KINGS IV. 42.

OR

## SHORT MEDITATIONS

ON SELECT PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

FOR

EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

WITH A PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WEEK."

"My meditation of *Him* shall be sweet."



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## JANUARY 1.

*But whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.—PROVERBS XVI. 20.*

LET this be our motto on the commencement of a new year, and let us consider what is implied in trusting in the Lord, and the happiness arising out of it. First, for righteousness and strength;—righteousness to justify us from all things, from which we could not otherwise be justified; *from* all the penal and *in* all the preceptive demands which are written in the book of the law; and secondly, for strength to do and endure whatever we may be called upon to perform or suffer in the ensuing year. “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Blessed be God for this assurance of grace sufficient for every purpose of living or dying. So that come what may, we are provided with a promise suitable to our wants. Next, we are to trust in the Lord for all things pertaining to life, and unto godliness; and here again we have a promise that he will make “all grace abound toward us,” so that we may confidently put our trust in him for health and happiness, and all good things. No good thing will he withhold from them that fear him. How happy, then, ought we to be, having a perfect righteousness, and an all-sufficiency of grace, and a promise of all good things; what more can we need to make us perfectly happy? nothing but a sense of these mercies, and a full persuasion of the truth of God in his word, and of his faithfulness to his word. Lord, evermore give us this persuasion, and grant us to be “filled with all joy and peace in believing; that we may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

## JANUARY 2.

*Give thanks always for all things.*—EPHESIANS V. 20.

WHAT abundant matter of thankfulness has every believer!—To be chosen of God from everlasting, and to be called in due time to the knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins, are never-failing subjects of thankfulness in the absence of all others. But when we consider with how many mercies we are daily surrounded; health and strength, and all things pertaining to life and unto godliness; grace sufficient for our daily need, and a promise, for the future, that he will never fail us nor forsake us—what can we want more to move us to thankfulness, provided only, our hearts are in tune to praise him,—who hath dealt so bountifully with us,—who daily loadeth us with benefits, and ceaseth not even in the night season; but keepeth us by night and by day from all evil, and hath undertaken to keep us by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation; so that our prospects for time and eternity are equally good, and pregnant with blessings? “Bless the Lord, therefore, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,—who forgiveth all thy sins—who healeth all thy diseases—who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s—who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.”

## JANUARY 3.

*The Lord is my helper.*—HEBREWS XIII. 6

CAN any thing tend more to quiet our fears and to set all our anxieties at rest, than to believe that the Lord is our helper, by covenant engaged to assist us, and that more particularly when all other helps fail. Nor is it a small matter of consolation, that he knoweth exactly what help we require, and when we require it, so as to be able to afford it not only effectually, but also in season. “He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust, and therefore he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way for our escape, that we may be able to bear it.” Thus he delivered righteous Lot, who with hearing and seeing evil continually had vexed his righteous soul; nor was he at any loss for the means of his deliverance, when vain was the help of man; for who could have foreseen what was likely to befall, or having foreseen, could have delivered him out of the hands of the Lord. Thus it is, that God, knowing what is going to happen, delivers his people in due time, and makes a way for their escape. The Lord is our helper, and we need not therefore fear what man will do unto us, since we are secure in his protection, from all evil, from every quarter. Man cannot hurt us, and the Lord has promised to bless us—so that we have every security which we can desire to make us perfectly happy.

## JANUARY 4.

*And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.—*

LUKE XXIV. 27.

IF the loss of any works is to be regretted, surely the loss of these discourses of our Saviour in the days of his flesh, is more to be regretted than any other that can be imagined. What would we not give, for instance, for this exposition of the prophecies, wherein was explained their whole application to himself? So we think within ourselves; and yet how little do we value those discourses which we really have, and which have been transmitted to us just as our Lord delivered them,—his sermon on the mount and on other occasions. How little do we value them in proportion to their real merit, and to the value we should have set upon them, had we been told, that such a discourse had been delivered and lost. Let us learn hence to esteem the word of Christ, remembering that there is quite enough left for us to enlighten us in the way of salvation; and that anything more would be rather for the satisfaction of our own curiosity, than the confirmation of our faith. If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe any further revelation. We want no new truths, but only a further experience of such as we know. We want no new testimony, but a more confirmed belief of that which we have already received, “that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,” of whom each individual should think himself chief.

## JANUARY 5.

*It is the Lord !—JOHN XXI. 7.*

How much is implied in these words ! The grand difficulty in all our experience, is, to realize the hand of God. When we can do this, whether in evil or good, it reconciles us mightily to the one, and enhances the other. It is only as his gift that anything is really good, or can do us good ; and, therefore, when we can say, “ It is the Lord,” that gave me this thing, we have said all that can be said to give it value. The giver is the continuer. He is of one mind, and none can turn him ;—no, not we ourselves, to withdraw his mercies from us. His gifts and calling are without repentance, even as he himself is without variableness or shadow of turning. When, again, any evil, or apparent evil befalls, how much does it enable us to bear it patiently, when we can believe that the hand of the Lord is in it. This is true, whether we believe it or not ; but the comfort is in the apprehension—in believing that God takes notice of us—that nothing befalls us but by his divine permission, and that he will permit nothing but for our good. Nothing shall by any means hurt you. No ; let it appear ever so hurtful in itself, yet shall it not hurt the people of God. His eye is ever upon them, and his ear is open unto their prayers. To him be glory.



## JANUARY 6.

*He knew what was in man !—JOHN II. 25.*

IT is matter of great consolation to us in all our exercises, that the Lord knoweth exactly whereof we are made. He can be “ touched with the feeling of our infirmities, having been tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin.” But not only so : he knoweth all the motions of our hearts, he knoweth that we have in us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and therefore he hath made provision for us in the covenant of grace, that we should not turn away from him. Yea, he hath promised to put his fear in our hearts, and to keep it there ; and however deceitful they may be, yet he knoweth all things, and knoweth their deceitfulness. “ He knoweth what is in man ; ” and, notwithstanding all this, he hath undertaken for us, to bring us safe to glory, and to keep us by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. Neither does he know only what is in our hearts, but also what is in the hearts of others towards us ; he knoweth all their designs however secret, and is able to frustrate them in our behalf. In short, he knows exactly our situation and circumstances, both outward and inward. He sees us at all times, and he can look into our hearts, and read our distresses ; and, what is more, he can remedy them.

## JANUARY 7.

*And his raiment became shining ; exceeding white as snow ; so as no fuller on earth can white them.—MARK IX. 3.*

Is not this emblematical of that righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, as much as the whiteness of Jesus' raiment exceeded that of any earthly raiment ? It is indeed the righteousness of God, and is as glorious as the Divine nature can make it. Every action depends much for its value on the dignity of him who performs it. The same act, for instance, which would be an act of condescension in the one, would be an act of presumption and impertinence in another.—What value then does it put on the righteousness of Christ, that it is not the righteousness of a creature only, but that the created nature of Christ was in union with the everlasting Godhead ; that being in the form of God, not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, he yet took upon him the form of a servant, and *was made* in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross. Who would not rather rest his salvation on this obedience than on any righteousness of the creature, however refined : who would not rather appear before the throne of God in this raiment, whitened as no fuller on earth can whiten it, than in the miserable rags of his own righteousness.

## JANUARY 8.

*Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.*—PSALM LXXVII. 19.

How marvellous are the providences of God, and by what unforeseen ways does he bring about his purposes. Every believer, on looking back, may trace the footsteps of Divine Providence, in the ordering of his affairs, so far beyond any contrivance of his own, that he may well exclaim with the prophet, "His footsteps are not known." They are only to be known, indeed, by looking back upon them, for we cannot possibly anticipate the means by which his providence will accomplish his ends, but on the contrary, he generally makes use of such means as we had no conception of; so making foolish the wisdom of the wise, and bringing to nought the understanding of the prudent. The mysteries of providence are only surpassed by the mysteries of grace, which indeed surpass them as much in their admirable nature as they do in their importance, so that out of death comes life, and righteousness instead of sin; nor do we ever perhaps, appear, farther off the divine end, than when righteousness is first revealed to our souls. "The law entered that the offence might abound,"—and so difficulties in providence enter that the deliverance may appear more conspicuous, and that the blessing coming by a contrary wind, we may know to whom to refer it.

## JANUARY 9.

*But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*

JOHN v. 47.

IT is the weakness of human nature which causes us to think that we should be better satisfied with some other evidence than with what we have—for which reason the Jews were always seeking a sign: not so the Christian indeed,—for signs are not for them that believe, but for them that believe not. He knows that he cannot have any better ground of believing than the simple word of God; and he feels in himself such a power of unbelief, that even if one were to rise from the dead, he is assured he could only believe as he was enabled—no, not even if he heard the Saviour himself, or that voice from heaven which said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The believer’s business is with the revealed will of God, which contains every thing necessary for salvation. This is the third instance in which our Saviour refers to the writings of the Old Testament as speaking of him. The other two are where he tells the Jews to “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me,” and where he expounded to the two disciples, beginning at Moses and the prophets the things concerning himself. How much, therefore, does it behove us to search the Scriptures in this view, and to take them up always as the testimony of God concerning his Son, Jesus Christ; for all the promises of God in the Old Testament are to be understood as made to us in him, being all yea and amen in Christ Jesus; and all the threatenings as directed against those not interested in his perfect salvation.

## JANUARY 10.

*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*—COLOSSIANS III. 15.

WE cannot experience a greater blessing than to have the peace of God ruling in our hearts, and therefore it is added—Be ye thankful, as if it had been said, that though we had nothing else to be thankful for, yet this were sufficient to excite our thankfulness; and so undoubtedly it is; for what greater benefit can we have, than that the peace of God should keep our hearts, alway, through Christ Jesus. Wherefore our Saviour says, “My peace I leave with you—my peace I give unto you.” It was his best legacy to his disciples, and it is a legacy of which we cannot be defeated. “Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” The world’s gifts are not only inconsiderable in value but uncertain in tenure. But blessed be God, his gifts are without repentance, as he himself is without variableness or shadow of turning. Have we not cause, therefore, to be thankful for this blessing of peace, and the more our thankfulness springs from such sources, the more evenly will it flow, for as the peace of God is to keep our heart *alway*, so we can never be without matter of thankfulness, while that peace is the foundation of it.

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## JANUARY 11.


*And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.—MATTHEW XXVII. 51.*

SIGNIFYING that the entrance into the holiest was now made open, so that we may now come with boldness unto a throne of grace ; Christ having consecrated a new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, for us to approach his divine nature, and having given us encouragement to enter by the same way. Thus being made nigh by the blood of his cross, we may approach God as our reconciled Father, and are admitted to the privileges of kings and priests unto God. For into the holiest entered none but the high priest only, and that once a-year. But now Christ being come, an high priest of good things to come, not by the blood of bulls and of goats, but by his own blood, he hath entered in once, having obtained eternal redemption for us. What disparaging thoughts do we in general entertain of this great transaction, and how low do we rate the value of that one offering which perfecteth for ever, when we withhold our offerings of prayer or of praise, on account of their own unworthiness ; forgetting that what God doeth, it is done for ever, and the veil being once rent, the way into the holiest is made open for ever.

## JANUARY 12.

*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed : and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.—*  
JOHN VIII. 31, 32.

WHEN we are oppressed with care, or fear, there is nothing but the truth that can relieve us. This seemed at first a circuitous way, but we find at last that it is the only direct way to relief, for it sets before us the infinite value of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and his all-sufficiency “to save even to the uttermost, all those that come unto God by him.” It sets before us how infinitely these transcend all our own merits or demerits, and all the concerns that we are the subjects of. They are like Aaron’s rod, which swallowed up the rods of the magicians ; they eat up all our cares and fears at once, by taking away the foundation of them, and shewing us what we are in Christ, and what we may expect from Christ—even the most perfect safety and happiness—all things pertaining unto life and godliness—grace sufficient for all the purposes of time, and glory everlasting ; not to mention the supply of all our outward wants, and the watchful eye of providence over us for good and for the prevention of evil. He withdraweth not his eye from the righteous, from them who have obtained like precious faith, in the everlasting righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



## JANUARY 13.

*To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*—LUKE vii. 47.

ALL religion is founded on the forgiveness of sins, and our love to Christ arises out of our apprehensions of our own sinfulness. Not that we are sinners one more or less than another, “for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and are all equally far from that righteousness, which is required by the law; for the law is *spiritual*, but we are carnal, sold under sin. But though we do not differ in our real condition as sinners, we differ greatly in the apprehension of our state as such, because there is in us all, a seed of self-righteousness, which sets itself up in opposition to the righteousness of God, and though most heinous in itself, is ever persuading us that we are not such sinners as others, and consequently that we have not so much to be saved from, nor to be indebted to grace for, in the matter of salvation. This spirit is the greatest enemy to our peace, and to our enjoyment of Christ: that enjoyment springing chiefly from a deep sense of sin, and a conviction of our lost estate before God. To such the assurance is sweet, “Thy sins are forgiven thee,” and those words come with power, “Go in peace.” Yea, Lord, grant us evermore this peace, and to that end grant that we may grow in grace and in a sense of our obligations to pardoning mercy, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and also in the apprehension of the sin of self-righteousness, so that it may rather help us than hinder us in the way of salvation.



## JANUARY 14.

*For they know his voice.*—JOHN x. 4.

WE cannot have a better evidence of belonging to Christ, than knowing his voice in our hearts : for as no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost, so is it by the Spirit of Christ only that we can recognize the voice of Christ in our hearts ; speaking peace by the blood of his cross, and encouraging us from time to time to come unto him, that we may find rest. This is that peace of God which passeth all understanding, and which is to keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. This is that presence, which is to go along with us, and give us peace, and truly it is ever present with true believers, even when they least perceive it, saying, “ this is the way, walk ye in it ; ” when they turn to the right hand or to the left. They find that no other voice will speak peace to their souls, no other voice will calm their troubled thoughts, nor will any other quell their corruptions. But no sooner is the voice of Christ heard within, than the turbulence of passion is at an end. He says, “ peace ! be still ! ” and immediately there is a great calm. It is no wonder, therefore, that believers should know his voice, and should know it from any other, for they find that no other, however refined, has the same effect.

## JANUARY 15.

*Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal :  
the Lord knoweth them that are his.—2 TIMOTHY II, 19,*

OUR consolation is not that we know God, but that we are known of him, for our best knowledge after all is only ignorance, but the knowledge which God has of believers is a knowledge of complacency, founded on what they are in Christ, and which cannot be disturbed by any want of fitness in the subjects of it. The Lord knoweth those that are his, and he has made them his with a perfect knowledge of what they are in themselves : sinners, guilty, helpless, but saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. So that no after discoveries of unworthiness can disturb his purposes of grace toward them ; because he hath chosen them in Christ with the fullest apprehension of their infirmity, and their utter unworthiness of his favours. What a calm does it bring upon the mind when we can see our salvation secured, in the person of Christ, by the foreknowledge of God, and out of the possibility of danger. “ My Father which gave them me is greater than I, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand ! Yea, Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief,” and enable us to rest with perfect assurance on thy word, that none shall pluck us out of thy hand.

## JANUARY 16.

*And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise  
all the day long.—PSALM XXXV. 28.*

THIS is not the only place in which righteousness and praise are coupled together? For it is said in Isaiah, “As the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring up, so will I cause righteousness and praise to spring forth out of the earth,” or out of our hearts, which by nature are earthly; a disposition which we inherit from the first Adam. But as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we also of the heavenly. We shall be renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us,—Christ Jesus;—in righteousness and true holiness. Then shall a new song be put into our mouths, even a song of thanksgiving unto him our God. For how can we apprehend his righteousness, or rather be apprehended of it, without a sense of thankfulness. There is no day of our lives in which we have more cause for joy than that in which we are brought to the knowledge of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is our riches and the length of our days, that which assures our prosperity and happiness. Judge us, O Lord, according to thy righteousness. Behold us as clothed in it. Look upon us in the Beloved; and look not upon us in our blood. So shall we be safe from the paths of the destroyer.

## JANUARY 17.

*When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel.—*  
HOSEA xiii. 1.

THERE is nothing more true in divinity, whatever it may be in human policy, than that before honour goeth humility, and a haughty spirit before a fall. If we look back to our own experiences in times past, we may always trace the footsteps of pride before a fall, and we shall as invariably find that honour has been preceded by humility. "God upholdeth the humble in spirit, but beholdeth the proud afar off." And because we sometimes disregard his warnings, he makes us feel the consequences of our own pride in some sensitive part, through the instrumentality of man. He causeth the proud to ride over our heads;—for the wicked are God's rod, with which he chasteneth his people: but when we humble ourselves again, then he throws away his rod, and punishes the wicked for their presumption; or even corrects his own people, as he did Job's friends, who may not vex each other with impunity. He punishes the rod and exalts the sufferer; for whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased.

## JANUARY 18.

*Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season ; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.*—HEBREWS xi. 25.

THERE is nothing but a real and a thorough persuasion of the love and favour of God can cast out the love of the world : “ For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him ; ” by which it is clear that these two cannot consist, and that where the love of the Father really is, it not only can, but actually does, cast out the love of the world. It makes the world seem as nothing in comparison of the joy that is set before us ; and it makes us willing to encounter the afflictions which belong to the people of God. Not that we are to understand by this, that the people of God have no enjoyments in this life. Far from it. They have the presence and peace of God, which as far exceedeth all earthly pleasures, as it passeth our own understanding. We feel it, but we cannot conceive it till we *do* feel it. It is an inconceivable quietness of spirit, engendered by a sense of the forgiveness of sins, and of our being in perfect friendship with God. Thus, God and we being agreed, we become of one party, and make head against the world. The love and fear of God takes place of the love and fear of man. And then we may be said really to enjoy life, when we cease to live unto ourselves and to the world.

## JANUARY 19.

*God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*—1 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

THIS verse contains the whole doctrine of salvation :—God taking our nature, that we might be made partakers of the divine nature—declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead—a mystery which angels desire to look into—made known to all nations for the obedience of faith—believed on in the world—and to crown all, Christ himself received up into glory, and set down at the right hand of God, to see this great work of his made effectual for the salvation of sinners. “For he is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” This is indeed all our salvation and all our desire ; even the incarnation of Christ, his death on the cross, his resurrection and ascension. We can add nothing to this, we can only derive benefit from it. To be looking to Jesus is all that we have to do,—to what he was, and did, and is, on our account ; even the Son of God, with power to save, power to bless, and power to bestow upon us every good thing in heaven and on earth.

## JANUARY 20.

*Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things :  
But one thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part,  
which shall not be taken from her.—LUKE x. 41, 42.*

How much have we all of Martha in our constitutions ! how many anxieties and cares of this life, and troubles about things of little or no consequence, but which appear to us to be of the highest importance. The force of the temptation, indeed, lies chiefly in this, that we see things out of proportion at such times, and magnify our present concerns much beyond their real importance. The present business seems always of more consequence than the last, and each, as it arrives, becomes the most important of all. Whereas, in fact, there is but one thing needful, and that even in a temporal view. “ Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” But we prefer seeking these things in the first place, and leaving the kingdom to look after itself. We too, like Martha, are apt to persuade ourselves, that all is done from a sense of duty, and that a necessity is laid upon us to attend to these things. But there is a still greater necessity to attend to things of more consequence ; and we have the authority of Christ himself for believing that, whatever may be *expedient*, one thing only is needful. Let us therefore, as many as be his disciples, be thus minded ; and if in any thing we be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto us.

## JANUARY 21.

*That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*—JOHN xvii. 26.

THIS is a part of Christ's own prayer on behalf of those, who should believe on his name; and it is to be observed, that his prayers are in fact promises; because as he never asks anything but what he obtains; so that we may consider these petitions as so many intimations of the good-will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. And can anything exceed the good contained in this promise, that "the love wherewith thou hast loved me," even all the delight which the Father has in the Son, whom he declared to be his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased,—that "this love may be in them," and I, even I, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead" personally—"I in them." Can anything exceed the greatness of this promise, that Christ himself, together with all the fulness of the Father's love, shall dwell everlastingly in the people of God. Neither are these benefits confined altogether to the future, though the full enjoyment of them is reserved in heaven for us. But we are taught to expect that, even upon earth, Christ will condescend to dwell in our hearts by *faith*, and that we being rooted and grounded in the doctrine of his love to sinners, shall be able to comprehend with all saints, "what is the length, and breadth, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," that we may be "filled with all the fulness of God!"



## JANUARY 22.

*Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.—*  
JOHN xvii. 12.

How secure are all the children of God in the hands of Christ, who, even in the days of his flesh, lost none of those committed to his charge but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now that he is exalted to be a prince and a Saviour, and that all things are committed to his hands, we are even more secure in his keeping, for he has all power in heaven and in earth, and none is able to pluck his people out of his hands. No; not all the powers confederate of earth and hell, can wrest one sinner out of the hands of the Saviour, though his own heart be in league with his enemies, and ready to betray him into their hands at every turn. But still the Lord Jesus Christ has him in his own keeping; and though Satan may desire to have some of Christ's flock, yet he will not surrender one of them to his will, but will keep them by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. This is the true faith and perseverance of the saints—the faithfulness of Christ to his own covenant engagements, and not their own faithfulness to grace received, or anything inherent in themselves. They stand by faith, and their faith standeth by the power of God, without possibility of failure.

## JANUARY 23.

*The Lord bless thee and keep thee ; the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.—NUMBERS vi. 24, 26.—PSALM iv. 6.*

THIS could only be in and through Jesus Christ ; so that we have here an instance of the gospel preached in the book of the law, and the word of Christ verified, that all the Scripture, properly understood, testified of him. It is in him only that we can behold the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. It is in him that all nations shall be blessed, and he is not only king of righteousness but Prince of Peace. It is he that gives peace and continues it. “ My peace I leave with you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” The world’s gifts are for the most part given grudgingly, and are not only constrained in the gift, but uncertain in the continuance. The gifts of the world are conditional, but the gifts of Christ are absolute and unconditional. The gifts of the world are at best but temporal gifts, but those of Christ are everlasting. They extend through time and eternity. Here then are three benefits, the blessing of God, which is life for evermore ; the light of his countenance, or his sensible favor ; and peace, the effect of being reconciled to him through the blood of the cross, and all these secured to us by the unchangeableness of the giver. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. “ Even so, Lord Jesus.”

## JANUARY 24.

*I ascend unto my father and your father, and unto my God and your God.*—JOHN XX. 17.

HENCE we learn by what right we call God *our* God, and how he becomes our Father. It is by virtue of our relationship to Jesus Christ. God being his God and Father, becomes ours in him; and what a privilege is this—to have the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for our God and Father, bound by the same covenant engagements to us as to him; for all the promises of God are yea and amen in him, to the glory of God by us. His is the glory, and our's the benefit, we receive all the blessings of adoption into the family of God freely on our part for the sake of Jesus Christ. And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father, and enabling us to plead the love which he bore to his only-begotten Son, as the groundwork of all our blessings and hopes toward him. “For he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” Lord Jesus! keep us evermore in remembrance, when we would give way to any despondency or doubt of God's love, that he loves not for any thing in ourselves, but that he is our Father because he was thy Father, and our God because he was thy God.

## JANUARY 25.

*Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*—1 TIMOTHY vi. 17.

GOD not only gives us all things, but he gives us also the enjoyment of them, and gives us them for this very purpose, that they may be enjoyed. We should never, therefore, be so far out of conceit with his gifts or so far undervalue them as to think them not worth the enjoyment; for this is a disparagement of the grace and intention of the giver. If he gives us them to enjoy, it is as much our duty to enjoy them as it is to fulfil any other of his gracious provisions towards us, so far as that fulfilment rests upon us. I do not frustrate, says the Apostle, the grace of God. I do not endeavour to make void the gracious purpose of God. For if righteousness come by the law then Christ is dead in vain. To endeavour to establish our own righteousness is to make void the righteousness of God. So, not to enjoy the benefits which God bestows upon us, is to make void the purpose for which they were bestowed. There is no duty more incumbent upon us, (if duty it may be called) than that of cheerfulness—to serve God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; and above all *cheerfully* to contribute of such benefits as we possess to promote the cheerfulness of others. Lord! open thou our hearts and our hands for this purpose, and grant us that we may lay up for ourselves a good foundation for the time to come.

## JANUARY 26.

*At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched.—NUM. ix. 18.*

WHAT a blessing is it to have all our movements under the direction of Providence, and not to move till the cloud moves—to have the divine favour always accompanying us, even a sense of that peace which passeth all understanding—and which is promised to all those who by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let their requests be made known unto God. It was in this manner that believers of old regulated their conduct, and ordered all their affairs. Abraham when called out of his country, obeyed; but he did not move till he was called. Isaac also, and Jacob, were watchers of divine providence, and found their account therein, being heirs with Abraham of the same promise—that they should inherit the land wherein they were strangers. How much more, then, does it become believers of the present day, who have so many more assurances of the good will of God towards them, and who have seen the accomplishment of those great promises relating to the coming of Christ, and heard the words and seen the things which many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear, and saw them not—how much more does it become us to repose with perfect confidence on the providence of God, and to believe that “he who spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, will with him also freely give us all things. Christ hath commanded us to commit our way unto the Lord, and to put our whole trust in him, believing him to be our Heavenly Father, who will take care of us, and perform all things for us. Amen and Amen.

## JANUARY 27.

*not the God of the dead but of the living : for all live unto him.—LUKE XX. 38.*

**A**, all owe unto him, life and breath and all things ; only the life of the body, but, what is of ely more importance, the life of the soul. It is ; who liveth in us, and enableth us to live a life th on the Son of God. By his Spirit he renews sin, and gives us spiritual faculties to discern his “ the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, f grace and truth.” Without these faculties we , comeliness in him that we should desire him ; e nothing in his life and death more than in a y or tragedy, which may move admiration or but does not conciliate love. But when Christ possession of the soul, as the law of the Spirit of he makes us free at once from the law of sin and uth, and the same life which he lived in the flesh rfects according to our measure in us, teaching that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we l live soberly, and righteously, and honestly, in resent life.” Above all, he gives us a spirit of eess and lowliness of heart, that we may find rest ur souls, and we do find rest accordingly. Yea ! d that the life of faith is the death of pride, and : thousand vexations and troubles which spring pride, whereby we are “ kept secretly in his ion from the provoking of men.”

## JANUARY 28.

*For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.*—NUMBERS x. 29.

How much is implied in this short sentence! The Lord, even Jehovah, he who hath all power in heaven and on earth, hath spoken good concerning his people. And what is this good that he hath spoken. It is contained in those many promises which are scattered up and down the Bible, like so many gems and precious stones upon the face of the earth. Let him that will gather them, and let him that will take of the waters of life, even of the living waters which Christ giveth, *freely*. He has promised us his Spirit, to abide with us for ever, and to be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life. He has promised us all things pertaining unto life and godliness; and he hath promised to be gracious unto us at the voice of our cry. Let our hearts answer for God, whether he hath not in many things answered even our desires; yea, he hath promised us that whatsoever things we desire when we pray, believing, we shall receive at his hands. He hath promised us an exemption from care and fear, our two greatest enemies; and this he gives by revealing unto us his blood and righteousness, as infinitely transcending all our wants, and swallowing up all our demerits. All these good things hath he spoken concerning Israel, who alone is able, but who is abundantly able to make them all good. Unto him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## JANUARY 29.

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.—JOHN XV. 7.*

WHAT an unlimited promise ! and with what perfect reliance may we rest on him that made it for the performance of it. Jesus Christ, “ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” the same faithful, promise-keeping Saviour, who never failed any that put their trust in him. Lord, receive our faith, and enable us to look unto thee for some of the benefits contained in this promise ; for more faith and increasing gratitude ; for thou givest more grace ; and this is one of those things we desire may be done for us ; that our hearts may be enlarged with a sense of thy love, and that our persons being justified, we may live in a continual sense of our acceptance with thee, and may have constant access unto thee, to make known our requests by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving ; and thus living in friendship with thee, we may not doubt of dying also in the same friendship, and in the full assurance of faith ; having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. This is the petition that we have asked of thee, and we doubt not that we shall obtain it, through the prayer of faith, and the supply of the Spirit of Christ Jesus our Lord.



## JANUARY 30.

*And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.*

LUKE xxiv. 53.

IT was no doubt a season of great refreshment to the spirit of the Apostles and of the disciples of the Lord generally, after their great disappointment by his sufferings and death, to have seen him alive again, and to have handled, as it were, the word of life, and after having witnessed his ascension, to tarry at Jerusalem waiting for the promise of the Spirit. No wonder that they were inclined to be continually in the Temple, the type of Christ's body, and that at such a season, all their "work was praise." In proportion to the depth of their disappointment, would be no doubt, the height of their exultation and joy. Thus it is also with the resurrection of our hopes towards God. When they have laid dormant for awhile in the grave of unconcern or forgetfulness, and are raised again from the dead by a fresh application of the promises, it becomes a season of renewed joy, and our time is spent in joyful communion with God. Nor are we disappointed of our hope, "For blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness," and wait for the descent of his Spirit. "He shall come as the early and the latter rain, and there shall be showers in their season, even showers of blessing." Thus it was with the Apostles, and thus will it be with all who love his appearing.

## JANUARY 31.

*Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.*—DEUTERONOMY ix. 6.

THE Lord does not bestow his benefits upon us with reference to our own merits ; he does not look at what we are in ourselves, but at what we are in Christ. He considers us as totally without strength, and without help, when he vouchsafes his grace towards us,—as the Apostle says, “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” There is no merit, no ground for boast, all is of grace ; and God bestows whatever he bestows, freely, and therefore liberally. His motives are from himself, and are therefore above and beyond our merits. What return can we make, or what can we give in exchange for the gift of his Spirit : and therefore he bestows his Spirit upon us only for asking, not that we deserve aught by asking, but he would have us express our dependence in this way. Nor need we to inform God of our wants ; for he knows beforehand what we stand in need of ; and he will supply all our need according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus. What a rich fund of consolation therefore have we in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fulness, and we are filled in him. To him be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

## FEBRUARY 1.

*He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness, and honour.—PROVERBS xxi. 21.*

THIS is a counterpart of that promise, “He that followeth after me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” For Christ himself is both the righteousness and the mercy of God. In him was manifested the grace of God, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his own grace he saved us ;” and therefore to follow after righteousness and mercy, is to follow after Christ. And he that followeth after Christ, shall have life, righteousness and honour. “Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come ;” and the fruit of righteousness is peace. So that the Scripture every where is true to itself ; and as in the water face answereth to face, so one Scripture to another ; the Scriptures of the Old Testament to those of the New, and both to each other ; all testifying of Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness : and of righteousness as the foundation of all blessedness. Thus it is that we learn to see Christ in all things, and to look upon him as the channel of all our benefits, both temporal and spiritual. While we do so, we are happy : nor can we cease to be happy, but by looking away from him who is the fountain of all happiness.

## FEBRUARY 2.

*My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.—HEBREWS xii. 5, 6.*

WHAT an encouragement is this, under our several exercises, of what sort soever they be, that they are of the Lord's own appointment, and that they are sent in love; however bitter and unpalatable to nature, yet are they tokens of his love, and proofs of his fatherly affection. If we shrink from any thing in his service, he will make us feel that very thing in some other way, and shew us that it is not intolerable, and that we have nothing to fear. "Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, or of the son of man that shall be as naught, and rememberest not the Lord thy Maker." What can man do unto us—nothing that can hurt us indeed—he may curse, but so long as God blesseth, it matters little for the curses of men. We perhaps never enjoy more perfect communion with God, than under the frowns of the world. It is when our friends and our neighbours stand afar off, that Christ makes himself known to us, as he did to the blind man, when they had cast him out of the synagogue. In short, whatever we are called upon to sacrifice for the sake of Christ, he restores it an hundred fold in peace of mind, and in that sunshine of spirit, which we call cheerfulness—nor unfrequently he restores it in kind.

## FEBRUARY 3.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—*

PSALM ciii. 2.

WHAT numberless causes of thankfulness, have we at all times, and under all circumstances: but there are peculiar times, when we see the hand of God more manifestly, and feel his power within us, and such is the present time. He has kept our going out, and our coming in, and granted us to return with a more abundant sense of his goodness, with a belief of the forgiveness of sins, and the imputation of righteousness: with his Spirit dwelling in our hearts, and bearing “witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” Who can estimate the amount of this mercy! Then to be made sensible of all this, to be kept humble at the feet of the Saviour, and to be made to acquiesce in the whole dispensation of his most holy will towards and respecting us, so that we would not wish anything otherwise than it is, till he is pleased to make it so, what an exceeding mercy is this, to be healed of the disease of impatience, and made content with things as they are, blessing God for all that hath befallen us, knowing that nothing can befall us, but what is for our good, and his glory; how comfortable a state this is! Such is my sense of his mercies this day, therefore I say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.”

## FEBRUARY 4.


*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it out.*—PROVERBS xxii. 15.

THE Lord knoweth what we have need of, both in the way of encouragement and correction. He knoweth exactly what are our particular temptations, and he suits our exercises accordingly. He lays the cross upon us when and where we require it, "nor does he suffer us to be tempted above that we are able" in any one instance, but mercifully suits the exercise to its end: to bring us to a sense of our particular infirmity, "and the sin which doth so easily beset us:" that feeling our own weakness, we may depend more upon his strength, and may learn moreover, "in whatever state we are therewith to be content:" to be content with that cross which God hath laid upon us, is not only our duty, but our wisdom. Nay, it becomes us even to be thankful for it, knowing that it is exactly suited to discover our corruption, and that sin discovered may be sin subdued. I do indeed desire to bless thy name, O Lord, for all that has befallen me of seeming evil unto this day, for out of it all, thou not only deliverest thy people, but workest good to them. Nay, those very things which seem at the time to be most against us, are by thy overruling providence, made to work in our favour, and tend to the fulfilment of thy word, to our establishment, and to thy glory.

## FEBRUARY 5.

*They—entered not in because of unbelief.—HEBREWS iv. 6.*

IT is unbelief that shuts us out from all the great and good things promised to us in the Bible ; believe only, says our Saviour. The power of God, if I may so speak, becomes our power, when we can appropriate it by faith ; nothing shall be impossible to him that believeth. Whatever is within the compass of divine power to perform, becomes our portion by believing, even to the removing of mountains, or the withering of a fig-tree. There is no more arbitrary sovereign upon earth, than the real believer, if he could only live up to his privileges. “ Whatsoever ye shall ask,” says our Lord, “ believing, ye shall receive ;” what an encouragement is this to the prayer of faith. Oh ! that an entrance were administered unto us more abundantly into this kingdom of faith, that we really believed the promises of God made to us in his word, and lived in the belief of them. “ Then should our peace be as the rivers, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea ; we should call, and he would answer, yea he would say, here am I.”



## FEBRUARY 6.

*I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.—JOHN xvii. 9.*

THIS prayer, recorded in the 17th chapter of St. John, may be considered as the last will and Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ, on behalf of believers throughout all ages of the world; but the benefits of it extend to none but believers, and to these what a blessed consideration is it, that all his prayers are, in fact, the most solemn promises; for he himself says, when addressing his divine Father, “I know that thou hearest me always:” if therefore Christ be always heard, whatever he prayed for, must be taken for granted. And so ought also believers to take their own prayers for granted; for if they know that he heareth them, they know also that they have the petitions which they have desired of him. And Christ himself says, “I say not, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have believed that I came forth from God.” Here is the key of all true confidence in prayer, the belief of Christ’s mission on our behalf; for who is he that overcometh in prayer, but “he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief,” that we may believe more steadfastly, “that whatsoever we shall ask of the Father in thy name, thou wilt do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”



## FEBRUARY 7.

*And Jesus heard that they had cast him out.—JOHN IX. 35.*

UPON this it is to be observed, that though as man, he only *heard* that they had cast him out, yet, as God, he must have known it. For he who saw Nathaniel under the fig-tree, must have seen also, all that was going on, at the synagogue of the Jews, and heard all the questions, and all the answers that were given by this faithful witness for himself, inasmuch as they were dictated by his own Spirit; for what less than the Spirit of God, could have given such understanding and answers to a simple man. However, when Christ heard that they had put him out, he straightway sought him out, and when he had found him, he initiated him more fully into the doctrines of the everlasting gospel, and gave him a further insight into the mysteries of the truth. And is it not so even unto this day? Is it not, when we are cast out, that Jesus more particularly reveals himself, and that, when we have least of the favour of man, that we have then, often most of the favor of God. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you," and cast out your names as evil. Yea, there is more blessedness in contempt often, than in honor, because honor puffeth up: but when we are despised in the eyes of men, then do we betake ourselves more earnestly to God, and Jesus is ever ready to receive all that come unto him. Yea, he himself seeks them out, and when he findeth them, he reveals himself unto them, as he doth not unto the world.

## FEBRUARY 8.

*And—there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.—JOHN ii. 1.*

AND not only so, but Jesus himself was present on that happy occasion, to turn the water of human hospitality into the wine of the kingdom; and that same blessing still attends on marriage, changing an outward ordinance, into an inward benefit, so that many have been enabled to apprehend more and more of the value of salvation, “and to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Marriage is set forth in the Scriptures, as illustrative of the union betwixt Christ and his church, and perhaps, no better similitude could have been adopted, to give us an idea of the closeness of that connection. They that are joined to the Lord are one body, and become partakers of all the benefits of his blood and righteousness, are admitted to all his privileges and honours, and raised to sit together with him in heavenly places. And no one can tell what a blessing it is, where husband and wife are fellow-helpers of each others joy, and made to strive together for the grace of life. The Scripture says, “that where two of us shall agree upon earth, touching any one thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of our Father, which is in heaven.” Who then can estimate the benefit of husband and wife being united in prayer, to obtain all the blessings of salvation, and in committing their children, and all that concerneth them to the Lord.

## FEBRUARY 9.

*The righteous shall compass me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.—PSALM cxlii. 7.*

IF we wish for religious society, it is by the blessing of the Lord only that we can obtain it. We may run after professors, but we shall soon feel our mistake. Yet when it is the Lord's will to deal bountifully with us and to enlarge our souls, it seems as though the righteous should understand the signet, and compass us about. There is a seal of God upon the children of God, a name written which none can read, but those to whom it is given, and these will presently recognize the stamp and impression of the great seal of heaven, which is a seal of righteousness—the same which Abraham had in circumcision, and which Christians now obtain by the blood of the everlasting covenant. For their hearts are purified by faith, and being purified they have access unto God, and become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Let not such doubt that they shall be acknowledged by the children of God, and though professors acknowledge them not, yet God is their Father, Christ is their Saviour, and the Holy Ghost is their continual Comforter.

## FEBRUARY 10.

*Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things.—DEUTERONOMY xxviii. 47.*

FROM this it should seem that it is a great sin not to acknowledge our mercies, and surely, as a nation, we have been very guilty in this respect. For what nation is there that has had the Lord so nigh unto them in all things as this nation has, and yet we are insulting God to his face, and publicly denying his providence, as if all things happened by chance, or by fixed rules called nature's laws. Lord, lay not this sin to our charge, and look upon us, not according to our merits, but in thy great mercy remembering that we are but dust, and that as such, without thy divine instruction we can do nothing and can know nothing, not even discerning our right hand from our left. Yet hast thou them in this land that fear thy name, and speak often one to another, and who are willing to record thy mercies, but for their own evil hearts of unbelief, and those hindrances of the flesh which is ever lusting against the spirit, even as the spirit against the flesh. Yet thou art able to take out of us this heart of stone, and to make us sensible of thy mercies, and we bless thee that we are in our measure sensible of them. Not that we repay thee by our thankfulness, or are more deserving of thy mercy for feeling it, but we would not disguise this greatest of all benefits—a *sense* of thy mercies; keep us, we beseech thee, in this spirit of thankfulness, and enable us for ourselves and for others, not only to discern thy hand, but to acknowledge it in all things. So shall we understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. Unto thee be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

## FEBRUARY 11.

*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.—1 CORINTHIANS II. 11.*

No man is privy to the thoughts of another, nor can any know the depth of misery that is in a man, but the spirit of the man himself. Even so knoweth no man the height of God's mercy, but the Spirit of God who reveals it; and it is by discovering to us the depth of our iniquity that he enables us to take a measure as it were of that mercy. Not that we can apprehend it as we ought, or ever shall in this life, "for we know but in part, and we prophecy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." How humbling will then be the review of our past lives, when we see how shamefully we have distrusted God, and how, notwithstanding his many assurances and our repeated experiences of his delivering mercy, we have yet given way to ease or fear upon every new occasion, and done despite unto the spirit of his grace by perverting the lessons of his love, and mis-applying those very circumstances which he has appointed for our furtherance in faith to the fading of our unbelief, until he, by his Almighty power, has taken out of us the heart of stone and given us an heart of flesh.

## FEBRUARY 12.

*The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich ; and he addeth no sorrow with it.—PROVERBS x. 22.*

WHAT a blessing is it to obtain nothing without a blessing, but to possess all things under sanction of the blood and righteousness of Christ, whereby we are saved from all the inherent evil, and are enabled to extract all the real good contained in the things we possess. We are saved too from all the sorrow belonging to them, the care of getting and the fear of losing—yea, from all the anxieties of life, which torment men while they live, and fill them with miserable thoughts when they come to die. A little that a righteous man hath in this way is better than the riches of many wicked, not only than the riches of one wicked man, but of many wicked—because, how great soever their riches may be, they are accompanied only with sorrow. They do not contribute at all to their happiness, for they see no hand of providence in bestowing, and no security for the continuance. But he that holds all from God, however ready he may be to give it up, yet sees that none can take it from him. For as Christ said of believers, “ My father that gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of his hand : ” so may we say of God’s gifts generally, that none is able to wrest them out of our hands, being his gifts, and secured to us by his covenant love. Neither death, nor disease, nor misfortune of any kind can pluck them out of His hand. They are safe in his care and keeping.



## FEBRUARY 13.

*And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.—PSALM i. 3.*

THERE is no doubt a blessing on all that belongs to a righteous man, and on all that he does. Instance in Joseph who was indeed a prosperous man, and for whose sake God blessed all those with whom he was connected. How much does it become us therefore to watch the hand of the Lord—not to live upon his providences, for man shall not live by bread or outward dispensations, alone, “but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live.” We are sometimes called to live upon the promise, and a sweet life it is even before the performance, but no doubt the fulfilment of the word brings with it a higher gratification, even the luxury of a thankful heart. For without thankfulness there is no blessing, nor is it possible that that can be an answer to prayer which does not issue in praise. It was only that leper who returned to give thanks, whose faith had saved him. The others were healed in a natural way, though by a divine power—and without some apprehension of the hand which heals us, we cannot be said to be healed by faith. Lord, grant us evermore a sense of thy mercies; and whatever thou givest us, give us to see thy hand at the same time, and to acknowledge thy bounty. For it is thy blessing which alone maketh rich, and without that, whatever we get will only add to our sorrow and suffering.

## FEBRUARY 14.

*Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.—PSALM iv. 7.*

THERE is a joy springing from the assurance of salvation above and beyond all the joy of outward prosperity. This is the joy spoken of by the prophet when he says, "Therefore with joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation," which wells are the doctrines of the everlasting gospel, revealing the blood and righteousness of Christ as the foundation of all our benefits, With this joy Christ our head was anointed in the first place, and we derive it through him. "He loved righteousness and hated iniquity : wherefore God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows." And when we cleave to his righteousness, and abhor all that is opposed to it, we also become partakers of his joy in our measure. But what that joy will be in all fulness, we know not ; "for now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be made like unto him." What a prospect is this, to be made like unto the Son of God, and made partakers of the fulness of his joy, even of that joy wherewith he was anointed above his fellows. For he hath prayed for us, that we may be with him where he is, and may behold his glory, and not only behold it, but be made partakers of it. "For the glory which thou hast given me, saith he, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one."



## FEBRUARY 15.

*And they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the passover.—JOHN xviii. 28.*

CAN anything shew the extreme blindness of human nature more strongly than this ! Here are those who would not go “into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they should eat the passover”—a type of Christ’s sacrifice, who yet were not afraid to defile themselves with his blood, of whom they were the betrayers and murderers. They could eat the passover it seems, and yet were not partakers of the altar,—they had no part or lot in the matter. They had admission to the outward ordinance while they were as completely opposed to the spirit of it, as it was possible for the great deceiver to make them. They persuaded themselves that they were doing God service, while they were engaged in an act of the most open rebellion of which creatures were ever guilty with regard to their creator ; “For by him were all things made, and without him was not anything made that was made.” Yet while they were afraid of neglecting his service, and abstained from going into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled, they were accessaries to his murder. Lord ! enable us to judge not according to the appearance, but to judge righteous judgment, and let us ever recollect that the true worship of God, is not in the letter but in the spirit—“For we are the true circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” How many are there that would not miss the sacrament, who yet would not hesitate to crucify the Son of God afresh in his people !

## FEBRUARY 16.

*My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*—2 CORINTHIANS xii. 9.

THERE is nothing more true than that we do not fall from weakness, absolutely considered, but from an opinion of strength. There is no temptation so trifling, to which we may not become a prey, from thinking we can meet it in our own strength. Even the reproaches of a simple maiden overcame the firmness of Peter, of him who stood undaunted before the assembled synagogue. Neither is there any temptation so strong that we may not overcome it in the name of Christ. Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in him. This was the Apostle's experience, and it shall infallibly be ours. He will always cause us to triumph over every temptation that we meet in his name. We may say unto all such, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I command thee to depart, yea to come out of her, and no more to enter into her." The spirit of divination was expelled by the word of the Apostle, and that for ever. And so is the spirit of fear, or any other spirit that oppresses us.—"For he went about doing good, and *healing* all those that were oppressed of the devil," and he does the same unto this day. The power of Jesus is still present to heal, yea of all manner of diseases both of body and mind—care and fear in particular. "Let not your heart be troubled, saith he, neither let it be *afraid*." And his word is with power. He speaks and it is done. Even so, Lord Jesus.

## FEBRUARY 17.

*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*—HEBREWS xiii. 13, 14.

REPROACH is the birthright of a Christian. No sooner is he born again, than he becomes subject to the persecutions of the wicked. We hear of a great fight of afflictions, as soon as they were illuminated; and as it was with believers of old, so it is unto this day. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution; it is a part of their profession, and a part of their privilege. They shall have an hundred-fold *with* persecutions. These persecutions are privileges, because they are the means of more particular communion with God, and because they are the earnest of our inheritance. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us.—They are the seals of our profession. We are made partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that we may be also of the glory which follows; not that *our* sufferings have any thing to do with procuring that glory, but they shew that we are partakers of it. They shew that we are members of Christ's mystical body, by our being made to take part in filling up that which is behind of the measure of the sufferings of Christ. There is an allotted portion of suffering appointed for the Church, and it becomes us to take cheerfully that portion which falls to our share. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

## FEBRUARY 18.

*The liberal deviseth liberal things ; and by liberal things shall he stand,—ISAIAH xxxii. 8.*

It appears that the liberal man not only doeth liberal things when they fall in his way, but is at pains in *devising* them. His business is to invent occasions of liberality, and to find opportunities of doing good. "He deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." God is not mocked, "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption," mortification, and disappointment : but he that "soweth to the Spirit," and doeth whatsoever he doeth in the name of the Lord, "shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." There is nothing in which we ought to be more careful of our motives than in attempting to do good. The grand principle of all charity is this : "Freely ye have received, freely give." The free grace of God is the foundation of all true liberality. It is a sense of his goodness to us, that alone makes us good to others. We love him, and we love his, because he first loved us. And while this sense of God's love to us is fresh upon our minds, we cannot be otherwise than loving in our measure to all that belong to God. Oh that we lived more continually under such impressions. Then should we indeed become inventors of liberal things.

## FEBRUARY 19.

*But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.—EPHESIANS ii. 13.*

WHENEVER our souls get at a distance from God we may rely upon it, guilt is at the bottom. The sense of sin draws us from God, and so strengthens the power of sin, for we cannot overcome sin but by the grace of the Spirit: and the Spirit is no otherwise received, but by the gospel of Christ. Lord, keep us in the belief of this truth, "That the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin." Lead us not into temptation, we beseech thee; but if Thou see fit that we should be exercised with our own corruptions, deliver us from the evil and curse of sin—"For the strength of sin is the law." "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Lord, look thou therefore upon us, exercise thy compassion upon us exactly as our necessities require; keep, O keep us: save us for thy mercy sake, from sin, the world, and Satan. Let us be content to be nothing. Do thou be our all. Let us be content to be nothing in the matter of salvation. Do thou be our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our eternal redemption. "Yea, Lord Jesus, our hope and help are in thee; and though we are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, yet thy grace is sufficient for us, to establish our minds in the love of God, and the patient waiting for Jesus Christ."

## FEBRUARY 20.

*My God shall supply all your need.*—PHILIPPIANS iv. 19:

WHAT a mercy is there in the proportioning of our supplies to our wants. “Our heavenly Father knoweth what we have need of.” He knoweth the amount of our wants, and the best time of supplying them, and he supplies them accordingly; not so that we should be full and forget him, but to prevent our falling into temptation, through the want of necessary supplies. There is no greater evidence of a supply coming from above, than the time and manner of affording it; God does nothing out of proportion; he knoweth our necessities, and the times and the seasons are in his power. “What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits,” or how shall we sufficiently appreciate the benefit of having such a God for our Father, one that is intimately acquainted with all our circumstances, and will neither give us more nor less than we require for our happiness, and to keep up our communion with him. Thus we enjoy him in all things, and have fellowship with him both in our wants and in our supplies; in our wants by faith, and in our supplies by thankfulness. Yea, Lord, we acknowledge thee as the author of all our benefits, and the Father day of all mercies. Unto thee be all the glory for this our, and for ever.

## FEBRUARY 21.

*For I, the Lord, dwell among the children of Israel.—*

NUMBERS XXXV. 34.

WHAT a privilege is this that God should dwell amongst us ! O that we could keep in mind, who it is that does so dwell amongst us, and endeavour to make his habitation more worthy of him. For we are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and if so, “ what manner of persons ought we to be, in all manner of conversation and godliness ? ” Whereas our hearts are filled with the cares of this world, and we ourselves are slaves to care and fear. “ But God, who is rich in mercy,” will recover us sooner or later out of every snare, and enable us to glorify him upon earth, even as he hath glorified us in heaven. For he hath indeed made us “ to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” If then we are sitting in heaven, is it fitting that our hearts should be upon earth ? By no means ; our affections ought to be where our treasure is, even with Christ, at the right hand of God. And blessed be God, though we are sometimes enslaved by care, and sometimes by fear, yet he *has* given us hearts to love him above all things, and to desire above all things, the establishment of his kingdom and righteousness therein. Oh ! that we desired it more ardently, and sought it more earnestly, though indeed we have cause to be thankful, that we seek it at all. Let us not complain then, but rather give thanks unto him, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, and into the kingdom of his dear Son.

## FEBRUARY 22.

*Desiring the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.—*

1 PETER ii. 2.

THE word is compared to milk, from its nourishing qualities: and to sincere milk, because all other writings are adulterated, more or less, with carnal wisdom, or the wisdom of the flesh. These will be ever putting their own constructions and limitations on the word of God, hampering his promises with conditions, and so depriving believers of the benefit intended them by the free promises. The greatest difficulty we have to contend with in the christian life, is the getting rid of our own and other people's comments on the word of God; we are prone not to receive it simply, and sincerely, as it is written, but think it necessary to qualify and explain it by some limitation of our own. It is only by the gracious influences of the free Spirit of Christ, that these imaginations can be cast down, and that we can read the Scriptures in a spirit of simplicity. "Except ye be converted," says our Saviour, "and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." We must unlearn all our own preconceived notions of religion, and become open to the correction of truth, before we can taste "that the Lord is gracious," for our own thoughts upon the subject run in a channel of works.—Lord, grant that we may not only desire the sincere milk of the word, but that we drink, yea drink abundantly thereof.



## FEBRUARY 23.

*I have set the Lord always before me.*—PSALM xvi. 8.

LORD, grant that this may be our happy case for the future; that whatever we do, or whatever we undertake, we may set thee before us in all things, and consider thy glory as the chief end of all our actions. It is by so doing, that we shall most effectually secure our own happiness, “for in so doing, there is great reward;” that is, the benefit that results from it to ourselves is very great; for what can be a greater benefit than to see the hand of Providence in all our concerns, and to be continually watching the displays of his power on our behalf. They that will observe these things, shall indeed, understand the loving kindness of the Lord, and we have had reason this day to acknowledge it. We have seen his providence overruling the malignity of man, and also counteracting his intentions. We have seen the hand of the Lord stretched forth on our behalf, and it behoves us to acknowledge him as the giver of all good things, but more especially of the grace to acknowledge them. This it is which crowns the whole, and constitutes indeed the cream of the blessing. To see his hand in all things, and to set the Lord always before us.

## FEBRUARY 24.

*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust ; let me never be put to confusion.*

PSALM lxxi. 1.

THERE are many promises to the people of God, that they shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. The Lord has promised to be the light of their countenance, and to give them boldness even in the day of judgment, much more therefore before the tribunals of men ; and he wonderfully fulfilled his word to his suffering people in times of persecution, when he lifted up their heads above their enemies round about, and suffered not their faces to be ashamed. I have no doubt that many of them suffered much more from the *fear* of persecution than from persecution itself, and found it marvellously disarmed of its terrors, when it really came. We are apt to think with ourselves, what we should do in such and such cases, forgetting that without Christ we can do nothing, and endure nothing—and that his arm is as able to sustain us as it was to sustain them in the heat of persecution. I believe we feel more of our infirmities at this day, because we are not called to so great trials, for it is an undeviating rule that we feel our own weakness in little things and God's power in greater.

## FEBRUARY 25.

*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.—1 PETER v. 6.*

THERE are times when we see more of the power and sovereignty of God in effective providence, than of his grace and goodness, though mercy guides his hand at the same time and orders all things for good. Yet it is not so apparent to us at the time, but we are rather called upon to submit to his sovereignty and say "Thy will be done." Thus did Job, Eli, and others, mentioned in the Old Testament; and our Saviour has taught us this lesson of humility and submission in his own person. It would have seemed better to the flesh perhaps as it did to Peter, that he should not have suffered; but since it was necessary, he submitted. And we find that the way of humiliation was to him the way of glory. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore also God hath highly exalted him (that is in his human nature) and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow: of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Here we see that the glory of God was concerned in the exaltation of Christ, and so it is in the raising up his people out of the dust, and exalting them after their humiliation.

## FEBRUARY 26.

*For he shall not much remember the days of his life ; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.—ECCLESIASTES V. 20.*

THERE is nothing obliterates the recollection of the past like present joy ; no doubt the saints in heaven look upon their past lives, however long and tedious they might appear in passing, as nothing in comparison of that weight of glory which they now enjoy. So when we are lifted up by the light of the Lord's countenance shining upon us, how does it put out of recollection all our past suffering, and make them seem as nothing. Time passes quickly that passes cheerfully, and so far as we live in the apprehension of the truths contained in the Gospel, it must pass cheerfully to us. There are times no doubt when all may feel oppressed for want of a due apprehension of the blessedness of their estate in Christ, or through manifold exercises of their faith. But these seasons are not to be set against the general average of our feelings, and that rich persuasion of the love of God in Christ Jesus, which keeps the mind of the believer easy under any outward circumstances, and is his portion more or less at all times. O Lord, be thou pleased to fulfil thy word unto thy servants, and grant us in particular that we may not much remember the days of our lives, when thou hast answered us in the promised joy of our heart. Even so, amen.

## FEBRUARY 27.

*Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.*—PSALM iv.6.

THE great cause of cheerfulness is the light of God's countenance, which we can only enjoy by the testimony of the Spirit in and through Jesus Christ. He it is, that lifts up the light of his countenance upon us, and gives us peace through the blood of the cross. Yea, he it is who makes us cheerful at any time in the belief of the forgiveness of sins, and the imputation of righteousness. We can no more cause the sun to shine on a cloudy day, than we can command this blessing of ourselves. But God the Holy Ghost is ever willing to testify of Christ, when we are made willing to receive his testimony. It is our unwillingness to receive, and not his unwillingness to bestow, that causes us to receive so little. However, God willing, we should desire to set out afresh, and "forgetting the things which are behind," though our sins and miscarriages are manifest, we should "press toward" what is before us, even "the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus." And being called to such an inheritance we should endeavour to live worthy of it, and to enter in some measure on the enjoyment of it by faith. "For without faith it is impossible to please God," but through faith, we may do all things—yet not we, but Christ in us. "And this is the victory which overcometh the world," both its joys and sorrows, even faith in Christ Jesus.

## FEBRUARY 28.

*This is the word of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.—*

JOHN vi. 29.

WE are always apt to think that something is to be done in religion, because it flatters our own vanity, and makes us of more consequence in the matter of salvation. But the Bible is every where opposed to this view of the subject. It every where directs us to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, as the one thing needful, and as the great security of all covenant blessings. Our works are indeed of little importance, nor can we render a more acceptable service, than renouncing them altogether, and depending wholly and entirely on Christ's work for salvation, and for all the blessings that belong to it. One great hindrance to our confidence in prayer, and indeed, of the little success of all our spiritual efforts, is the not seeing Christ, as the Alpha and Omega of them all. For him and him only hath God the Father sealed, and if we would put that honour on our own heads, which God hath given to him alone, what wonder that we do not get forward in our endeavours. But let us once learn to rest upon his righteousness, and all things will again go well. This is the power which can alone turn the current of events in our favour, as it can alone effectually turn our hearts to the Lord's service. Our work is to believe.



## FEBRUARY 29.

*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.—*

JAMES i. 20.

THERE is nothing disarms wrath like a revelation of righteousness to the soul. For how can that man live in anger, whom God hath justified and acquitted of all evil, and who consequently has nothing to fret or to vex him. It is guilt which begets wrath, or as the Scripture saith, "The Law worketh wrath."—It stirs up all our evil nature, and makes us feel provocations doubly. But he who is delivered from the law, is also hid in the secret of his pavilion from the provoking of man. Provocation loses its hold upon us. Love is not easily provoked, because it feels that assurance of God's love, which supersedes the necessity of man's, and makes us more indifferent about it. It shews us the utter worthlessness of what men are generally contending about, and consequently takes away most of the occasions of quarrel: and where it does not absolutely remove them, it yet so far subdues them, and brings them into subjection to the law of Christ, that we are not given up to them, nor left to the dominion of them.—Wherefore let us, as it is written, leave off contention before it be meddled with.—For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God: neither does man's wrath illustrate God's righteousness, nor does the righteousness of God give any countenance to the wrath of man. Wherefore, indeed, are men angry, but because others have got what they want, or that they want what others have got. But if we are perfectly satisfied with our lot, and happy in our present condition, it must tend to lull the words of anger, and make us mild and friendly with all men.

## MARCH 1.

*Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.—DEUTERONOMY viii. 5.*

WHAT a mercy is it to have such a Father, who chasteneth us, not for his pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness, and consequently of his happiness; for what is Holiness but humility, the way in which Jesus went to the crown? “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” And indeed we do find rest, when we can give up our own consequence and quarrels, and commit them all unto the Lord. For even the archangel when he contended with Satan about the body of Moses, brought not railing accusations against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke thee.” So should we leave all our complaints in the hands of the Lord; remembering, that the rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the righteous. For it is our Father’s chastening hand laid upon us for good and not for evil, that he may humble us, and prove us, to do us good at the latter end. Let us therefore remember, in all these things, the Lord our God; and when they are removed, let us acknowledge him, nor say in our hearts, “Thy power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.” For it is he that giveth us power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto our fathers, as it is this day.



## MARCH 2.

*I will guide thee with mine eye.*—PSALM xxxii. 8.

THIS may mean either, to guide us by letting us see things in the light of the Spirit, and as God sees them; or to guide us by his providence, and by keeping his eye constantly upon us. As it is written, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous." In either sense, it is an equally excellent promise. For the great fault of our lives is in not looking at things as God looks at them, but judging after the flesh, and as other men judge—according to the present appearance of things. This has upset the faith of many in every age of the church, and it is that which we ought to be more particularly on our guard against. "These prosper in the land, (says the Psalmist) and have riches in possession. Then have I washed mine hands in vain," &c. But the Lord's inheritance is an invisible one—"incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Oh that our hearts were so set upon the things that are not seen, that we might not be so much disturbed with the things that do appear—that we could so realise those unsearchable riches of Christ, that we should not overvalue the vain wealth of the world, and the value of that life which is hid with Christ in God, that we should not be so much set upon this transitory one.

## MARCH 3.

*For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*—PHILIPPIANS iii. 20.

IT is lamentable how many of our thoughts we bestow upon outward things, and how few comparatively upon the things that pertain unto our peace—the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, his resurrection and ascension, and his acting in heaven for us, which is the procuring cause of all the benefits and blessings we are now enjoying on earth. For it is by his ever living to make intercession for us, that he is able to save us to the uttermost, and that we are put into present possession of the fruits of salvation. He not only suffered for us, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God;” but even now, being made nigh by the blood of his cross, he keeps us near unto himself by his intercession in our behalf; and by sending forth his Spirit, as the fruit of that intercession, to the crying, “Abba, Father,” in our hearts. Were it not for this, the occasional separations which take place between God and the soul, in sensible experience, would become perpetual, and produce everlasting misery. “But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,” who is also the propitiation for sins, and who thus redeems us to God. What need we then any further exhortation to let our conversation be in heaven, when we see Christ thus sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and advocating our cause with all the earnestness of an interested petitioner. To him be glory for ever and ever. . Amen.

## MARCH 4.

*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.*—HEB. xiii. 8.

THIS is the foundation of all true religion—the essential divinity of the Lord Jesus. “Except ye believe that I am, ye shall die in your sins;” because it was the divine nature of Christ which gave value to his sufferings and death. Had he been only man, his obedience unto death, would have been no more than was due on his own account; but as God, his righteousness acquired an infinite value, sufficient to justify all that believe, from all things from which they could not be otherwise justified. We have a further benefit from the divine nature of Christ in his continual presence and power. “Behold, I am with you, said he, even unto the end of the world.” And he hath all power in heaven and on earth to bestow all good upon his people; and being of one mind in giving and in continuing, “he is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him.” Yea, Lord Jesus, we look unto thee as our all-sufficient Saviour; all-sufficient to work out a perfect salvation, and all-sufficient to apply it. The residue of the Spirit is with thee, and Thou hast promised, that thou wilt never leave us nor forsake us. O let thy presence go along with us, and give us peace. Let Thy Spirit rest upon us, and keep us in the remembrance of those things which pertain to our peace, lest at any time we let them slip. For we feel our own infirmity, and how apt we are to forget those things which it is most for our benefit to remember. “Let thy grace therefore be sufficient for us, and thy strength be made perfect in our weakness.”

## MARCH 5.

*Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.—JUDÉ 21.*

CAN anything be more desirable, than to keep ourselves in the love of God ; which is only to be done, by keeping in mind continually the love of God, to us manifested in the gift of his Son Jesus Christ. “ For herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.” It is this love of God which feeds our love to God, and not only so, but our love to one another. For we can only walk in love, by “ believing that Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us.” This belief alone will beget love to the brethren, for he that loveth him that begat, will love those that are begotten of him. Love to the parent, naturally descends to the child, and even to the property of the person beloved. Whatsoever belongs to Christ, is dear to a believer in Christ, to one that really loves him. His word and ordinances, really such, that is, such ordinances as he presides over, and such as are sanctified by his presence. And he assures us, “ that wheresoever two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midst.” “ He looks at the heart, and he knoweth those that worship him in Spirit and in truth.” And to such he will have regard, and grant their request.

## MARCH 6.

*Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.—*

ROMANS V. 21.

GRACE is the fountain of all our benefits. They all spring from the everlasting purpose of God, and his grace toward us. “We are saved by grace through faith,” which is the instrument, and that faith has the righteousness of Christ for its object. This grace reigns through righteousness ; it is by means of the righteousness of Christ that the reign of grace is established ; therefore the kingdom of God and the righteousness of Christ are always coupled together. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” The kingdom of God indeed is made to consist in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which are the effects of righteousness, as certain as light and heat are of the sun’s shining. The Holy Ghost never refuses to bear testimony to this righteousness. It is only when we are setting up for ourselves some other righteousness that he resists us, but as soon as we are brought cordially to submit ourselves to the righteousness of God, then he and we are of one mind, and he no longer withholds his cheering influences. It is true we are not always equally happy in the belief of the truth, because we are not always living in the apprehension of it as we ought, and besides it is not necessary that we should be comforted at all times alike ; but still we may always have some apprehension of our own blessedness, even when we do not feel it so sensibly ; as there is often light from the sun without much heat. Thus the just shall live by his faith.

## MARCH 7.

*He will be our guide, even unto death.—PSALM xlvi. 14.*

THERE is nothing more profitable for us, than occasionally to review the footsteps of divine Providence towards us in time past, for the encouragement of our faith in times to come. For he that has brought us thus far, we may reasonably hope, will not fail us in time to come, and indeed, we have his promise that he will not ; but still the instances of his past interferences on our behalf, give great encouragement toward the belief of that promise. How often has he guided our feet into the way of peace, when we had wandered out of it, and will he not continue forth the same loving kindness towards us ? Assuredly he will. “ He will be our guide even unto death,” enabling us to believe in his blood and righteousness, and causing us to hear a voice behind us saying,—“ This is the way, walk ye in it, when we turn to the right hand or to the left.” For we are liable to go wrong in the pursuit of things seemingly right, as well as things obviously wrong. How many for instance are misled by profession from the things which pertain unto their peace, and seek in outward ordinances or the society of others, what is only to be found in Christ himself. How often again have we sought happiness in the pleasures of the world, and forgotten those pleasures which are of God only, namely, the pleasures of a peaceable conscience, and a heart established with grace.

## MARCH 8.

*Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him : for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.*—ISAIAH iii. 10.

THIS Scripture sets before us the foundation of all our blessings—"say ye to the righteous." Say ye to such as are interested in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, for in any other sense, "There is none righteous, no, not one." Say ye to them, "it shall be well with them." However it may be with others in time of general desolation or calamity, it shall be well with *them*, "for they shall eat the fruit of their doings;" and the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace of them that make peace. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effects of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Being assured of God's favour, it keeps us quiet under all circumstances. We are persuaded that he loves us, and being so persuaded, for this reason,—“If God be for us, who can be against us. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” Thus righteousness lays the foundation of all true confidence, as it is written, "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord."

## MARCH 9.

*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.*

—1 CORINTHIANS i. 26.

FORGET not to allay all the notions of envy, which are apt to arise at the successes of others, for we see that not many of those, who succeed in life, are called to the knowledge of salvation. It is the poor, the weak, and the ignorant, mostly that are chosen by God as vessels of mercy, whom he makes fit for his use, that he may make known his power, and display the riches of his grace toward them in Christ Jesus. "Say not," says our Lord, "we have Abraham to our father, for God is able to raise up out of these stones children unto Abraham." Instance in him, who ignorant and unlearned as he was, confounded the whole synagogue of the Jews, when they interrogated him of the manner in which he had received his sight. These and various other instances may serve to shew that Christ is indeed both the power and the wisdom of God to all that believe. "He breaks the stubborn spirit, he heals the broken in heart, he giveth wisdom to the simple, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Lord, let us never forget thy distinguishing grace in calling us to the knowledge of salvation, through the remission of sins, and that, in spite of the opinion which we entertain of our own abilities, and of our own consequence, either by education or birth, let us remember that benefit which is above all others, as far as the heavens are above the earth.



## MARCH 10.

*Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole.*—LUKE viii. 50.

THIS is the best and only remedy for whatever we see amiss in others, which we cannot amend. Trust for your mercies, and you cannot want your mercies ; —so to believe for their remedy is the only sure way to serve them. We may toil all day and take nothing. We may spend all our talents upon moral arguments and be nothing the better, but rather the worse ; whilst we cannot trust either for ourselves or for others, without experiencing a benefit therefrom. If it does nothing else, it exercises our dependance ; but many and great are the fruits of believing. By faith, women have received their dead raised to life again. Much more shall we see miracles of healing performed on the tempers and dispositions of those we love, and in whom we feel an interest. Only believe—“all things are possible to him that believeth.” The Lord will delight in showing himself merciful to them that trust in him, in shewing himself strong on the behalf of them that fear him, strong to subdue our own corruptions, and the corruptions of others, as well as to heal their bodily infirmities. For can we see the hand of the Lord upon the bodies of our children, and doubt of his power also over their spirit ? No, God is a Spirit, and he is able to subdue their spirits unto himself.

## MARCH 11.

*And as many as touched, were made perfectly whole.—*

MATTHEW xiv. 36.

THE cure was complete, though the act of faith was imperfect. "As many as touched him." It does not say laid hold of him, but "as many as only touched him, were made perfectly whole," and that of whatsoever disease they were afflicted withal. Nor does it matter at this day what our disease may be: however virulent and however inveterate, it must give way to the healing efficacy of the blood of Christ, "for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin;" nor does it need to be what is called an appropriating act, but a simple looking to Jesus, and a touching, but as it were, "the hem of his garment," apprehending the value of one of the least of his promises, by which we are admitted at once to the benefit of the covenant of grace, and an entrance is administered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The same faith which admits us to the enjoyment of the good contained in any one promise, admits us to all; and therefore we see that in that catalogue of worthies contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, their faith was manifested in many different ways, and had many different objects, but they all tended to one point—namely, the hope of righteousness. For as many as believed God, to them was imputed Righteousness without works; and being thus admitted to Righteousness, they became partakers of all the benefits and blessings belonging to the Righteous, and therefore it is said, that their faith, whatever it was about, "was counted unto them for—Righteousness." May it be so accounted unto us.

## MARCH 12.

*Evil pursueth sinners, but to the righteous good shall be repaid.—*  
PROVERBS xiii. 21.

THE righteous as well as the wicked sometimes seem pursued by evil; but the difference is this, that the Lord delivereth the righteous out of it all. For whatever the troubles of the righteous are, he has the Lord's promise for his deliverance. But it is not so with the wicked—when evil overtakes him it is that he may be destroyed for ever, and that his name may come utterly to an end. What a blessing therefore is it to be ever looking out for the Lord's deliverance, remembering his promise, and believing his word. The difference between the wicked and the righteous is not so much in what befalls them, as in the *result* of what happens. They are subject to the same afflictions, but the afflictions of the righteous are always attended with good. They do good to his soul. They bring him to depend more upon God, and to trust him better for the future, that in like cases he will provide a like cure, that all things, in short, "shall work together for good to them that love him." Thus he learns to be always giving of thanks, yea to bless God for all that befalls him, knowing that nothing shall befall him but shall turn to God's glory, and for his own good in the end.

## MARCH 13.

*Stormy wind fulfilling his word.—PSALM cxlviii. 8.*

THERE is nothing from which we may derive more encouragement than from the weather. One day the heavens are covered with blackness and the ground with snow—all things seem to threaten an eternity of water. The next comes out the sun, and a genial shower dispersing the snows, and the waters flow. So it is in the spiritual world. We are sometimes straitened in ourselves, clouds above and cold within, but now the Sun of Righteousness ariseth with healing in his wings. Our gloomy thoughts are all dispersed, and every thing begins to wear the appearance of a spiritual spring. For as the earth causeth the things that are set in it to spring forth, so the Lord will cause righteousness and peace to spring forth out of the earth. “Blow, thou north wind, and come thou south, (saith one) and cause the spices to flow out.” It is by alternate exercises and consolations that the Lord draws out the graces of his people. For as their afflictions abound, so also abound their consolations. The Lord sends affliction to prepare us for his blessings—we should not value them otherwise. Like the hard ground, our hearts would not receive the seed sown; but he breaks up the clods of rude nature, and mellows them with the frosts of affliction, that they may be ready to receive the word of righteousness, and to bring forth fruit unto everlasting life. Lord, grant us contentment in whatever state we are.

## MARCH 14.

*The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.—PSALM cxviii. 15.*

It is truly said, that they who are willing to record their mercies shall never want mercies to record ; or as it is expressed in the language of Scripture, “ He that will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.” What a mercy is it to be in health ourselves, and what an additional mercy is it to have our children in health ; but how much greater a mercy is it to be happy, and to have the prospect of happiness for them. For we are encouraged to ask what we will, and assured that it shall be done for us ; and what can we ask more desirable than for a blessing on our children, and that they may be made partakers of the same benefits which we enjoy ourselves, and that an entrance may be administered unto them into the same kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, into which we have obtained admission ourselves. In this way believers may be said to have the keys of the kingdom of heaven committed unto them. Not that they can alter God’s irrevocable decrees, but that their prayers are according to his decrees, and that he encourages them to ask such blessings as he intends to bestow upon them and theirs. We may surely therefore look forward with confidence to his blessing upon our offspring, when we feel ourselves encouraged to ask for it, and to entreat of him, above all things, that he would be pleased to receive them into his family, and make them, as well as ourselves, monuments of his loving kindness and grace. Two parents thus acting have great encouragement to hope from that Scripture, “ That if two of you shall agree upon earth touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.”



## MARCH 15.

*Let not your heart be troubled.*—JOHN xiv. 1.

How much do we need this exhortation! for how apt are we to suffer our hearts to be filled with the cares and concerns of this world, when they ought to be set upon the things of the world to come, or rather on those spiritual blessings and benefits, which form the substance of things hoped for, and are also essential to our present enjoyment. What a happiness is it however, that we have the promise of a voice behind us saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," when we turn to the right or to the left,—when our hearts are distracted either with cares or with fears. "Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Yea, Lord Jesus, we do believe in thee as the author of all our benefits and the giver of every good gift. Thou hast, by thy fatherly care, provided for us hitherto, and we believe that thou wilt neither leave us nor forsake us. In thy power and providence do we trust, and we believe that we shall not be ashamed, but, on the contrary, that thou wilt make us a name and a praise in all places, wheresoever we have been put to shame. For our righteousness is of thee, and unto thee do we trust, to make it as clear as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day. Thou sittest in the throne judging according to righteousness, and thou wilt judge thy people, and repent thee for thy servants, "though thou wilt by no means clear the guilty."

## MARCH 16.

*I would have you without carefulness.*—1 CORINTHIANS vii. 32.

LORD, it is our desire so to be; but the flesh lusteth against the spirit, even as the spirit against the flesh, and we cannot do the things that we would. We cannot keep ourselves so unconcerned about outward things as we would wish to be.—Do thou, therefore, undertake for us, and help us against that host of cares that cometh daily against us. It is our prayer and desire to have our hearts kept entire, and our eyes single toward thee, “for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also.” And we are persuaded that there is nothing to be compared in importance with that kingdom and righteousness, which we would seek in the first place, trusting for all other things to be added. This is the true Christian spirit, and this it behoves us to exercise if we would be happy; even a quiet reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ for the issue of all things; being careful for nothing, but casting all our cares upon him who careth for us. How many of our thoughts are eaten up by worldly cares, God only knows, and he can alone provide a remedy in the blood and spirit of Christ, the one cleansing us from the guilt of sin, and the other subduing its power. “His grace is sufficient for us, for his strength is made perfect in our weakness.” Most gladly therefore should we glory in our own infirmities, and in our own inability to combat with our own corruptions, that the power of Christ may rest upon us. “For when we are weak, then are we strong.”

## MARCH 17.

*Thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.—*

PSALM lxy. 2.

“WHOSOEVER cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.” The foundation of all religion is a belief in the existence of God, and of his ears being open unto our prayers. For how can we serve God unless we are persuaded that he regards us, and that he hears us when we cry unto him. And whence shall we acquire such a persuasion, but from seeing the way of reconciliation opened for us by Jesus Christ, and a door of communication betwixt God and our souls. Without such a ground of confidence, we must, as sinners, feel at a distance from God, and consequently can have no confidence toward Him. It is only by stating ourselves in Christ, and believing ourselves one with him, and by consequence admitted to all his privileges and freedom of access, that we can find the like freedom, or can with confidence draw nigh unto God. But with what strong confidence may we then make our appeal unto Him when we do it in the name of Christ only, without any regard to what we are or are not in ourselves; and what an advantage is it to be a believer in approaching the throne of grace, that he is always sure of a good reception. “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.” They are as open to the prayers of believers as of Christ himself. So he assures us that the Father himself loveth us because we believe on him.



**MARCH 18.**

*The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.—1 PETER iii. 12.*

WHAT a comfort is it under all circumstances to believe that the eye of the Lord is upon us; not in a legal way to take vengeance of our inventions, but in a gospel way, to take care of us, body and soul, and to provide for us, and for all our wants spiritual and temporal—yea, and eternal. His eye is continually upon us for all these purposes, and we need not fear that he will ever withdraw it from us. For our encouragement he has further commanded us in all things, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known to him; and he has assured us that his ear shall be open unto our prayers. If, therefore, we are over fearful that he should withdraw his eye from us, we must assail his ears, for we are commanded to be earnest in prayer, as was Elijah, who prayed earnestly, or, as it is literally, prayed with prayer, “that it might not rain, and it rained not for the space of three years and six months.” What an encouragement to prayer is this! Even the elements obey it, and that offered up by a man of like passions with ourselves, carrying about with him a body of sin and of death. Lord, grant us to pray away thus earnestly and successfully.

## MARCH 19.

*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?—ROMANS viii. 32.*

IF we had right apprehensions of the gift of Christ, we should not doubt so much of other gifts. It comprehends all the rest—For as Christ is himself above all the rest, so the gift of Christ is an assurance of all other gifts. The gifts of providence, so called, are not to be compared to the gifts of grace. If we had right views of the demerit of sin, and of the gift of righteousness, we should see that it far transcends all other considerations. To be righteous in the sight of God is much more than riches or honour. It is durable riches and righteousness indeed. Our doubts of Providence arise for the most part from our low apprehensions of spiritual blessings. If our minds were more exercised on the things that pertain to everlasting life, if our hearts were set upon the kingdom of God, we should have much less concern about outward things, because these greater concerns would swallow them up. Our faith about greater matters would ensure our believing about the less, and we should see that he, who has provided a Saviour for us, will never neglect to provide for us such things as are necessary for the body. We should see things in their relative importance, and we should not doubt any longer of outward mercies from the apparent greatness of them, but rather look upon them as the least.

## MARCH 20.

*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them.*—GALATIANS iii. 10.

No one can tell what the curse of God is in its full extent, because no one has experienced it to the full. Therefore no one can tell what a blessing it is to be delivered from it by Christ's having been made a curse for us, and having endured the fulness of his Father's wrath, that we might be made partakers of the fulness of his blessing. In proportion to the depth of misery to which he became subject, is the height of mercy to which we are exalted, for he hath made us to sit together with him in heavenly places. Yea, the very glory which the Father gave unto Christ, hath he given to us, that we may be with him, and behold the glory which the Father hath given him. Thus it is that the curse and the blessing are set before us—the Law and the Gospel, and blessed be God that he hath enabled us to make choice of the latter, even of that “better part which shall not be taken from us.” In vain is it for men to set before us the curse of the Law, when Christ has once given us admission to the blessings of the Gospel. He hath indeed “redeemed us from the curse of the Law having been made a curse for us,” and it is but vain labour for man to endeavour to bring us under it again. “For my Father,” saith he, “who gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” None is able to undo the work of God, or to bring his people again under bondage to the elements of the world when he has once effectually delivered them.

## MARCH 21.

*Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.—ACTS ii. 33.*

THE gift of the Holy Ghost is the special gift of Christ, and a fruit of his ascension. Therefore, “if I go not away,” saith he, “the comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.” And no sooner was Christ ascended, than he poured out upon his people the gift of the Holy Ghost. Nor shall this gift cease till Christ ceases to sit at the right hand of God; for as long as his mediatorial office subsists, this shall be one of the glories of it, and to deprive him of this, is to rob him of one of the brightest jewels of his mediatorial crown. Let no one, therefore, think, that in these latter days we are not to look for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but let us rather look earnestly for this best pledge of Christ’s kingdom in our hearts. For he promised to give us living water springing up into everlasting life. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the greatest gift of all in a believer’s experience, and that which has to do more particularly with his comforts. For whatever may be his apprehension of the doctrine of Christ, however clearly he may have them in his head, he cannot make them effectual to the peace of his conscience, nor yet to the joy of his heart, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is by his continual presence alone that we can be kept in perfect peace. Therefore the church prays—“Let thy presence go along with us and give us peace.” “Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.” “Even so, Lord Jesus,”

## MARCH 22.

*Charity envieth not.*—1 CORINTHIANS xiii. 4.

BELIEVING confers a great benefit in exempting us from those feelings of envy to which we are otherwise subject. Not that we do not feel the motives of envy, for the spirit that is in us naturally lusteth thereto, but we are delivered from the power of it, that being dead wherein we were held, even that law which is the strength of sin. For the motions of sin, taking occasion by the law, work in us all manner of concupiscence and covetousness, but when we are delivered from the law, we are also delivered from the dominion of sin, which is the genuine working of a legal spirit. So that if we wish to overcome our corruptions, the only way is to overcome our legality, which is the strength of those corruptions, and whereby they live, and move, and have their being. But when the love of God is revealed in our hearts, it becomes the death of sin and of every evil passion. “Charity envieth not.” He that is loved of God has no occasion to envy any one. He knows that the love of God is boundless, and equally manifested in what he gives, and in what he withholds. The believer therefore envies no one, but is content with his place and station. He feels that to be richer or greater, in more health or in more honour, would be no addition to his happiness, though it often happens, that when he feels this, God more abundantly bestows all other things. “All these things shall be added,” saith Christ; and when we are made willing to receive them as additions, they are additions indeed. Then it is that his blessing maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow therewith. The blessing goes before, and prosperity follows.

## MARCH 23.

*He withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*—GALATIANS ii. 12.

WHAT an instance does this afford us of the infirmity of the best of men. Even Peter withdrew himself for fear of the Jews—he who had so boldly in the presence of the synagogue, defended the doctrines of Christ—even he withdrew himself from the company of the gentiles ; he who, by a special vision, had been instructed in this great truth, that with God is no respect of persons, but that in every “ nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him ; ” —even this same Peter withdrew himself from the society of believers, for the sake of pleasing the circumcision. It may teach us also not to be surprised at the conduct of Christians, in this respect, nor to mind too much the opinion even of the best of men, since they are so liable to be influenced by such insignificant circumstances. It may teach us also, to be on our guard against the influence of such associations on ourselves, and to fear the circumcision, rather from the effect of their society upon our own minds, than for the value of their opinion. What signifies what such men may think of us, if we only succeed in pleasing God.

## MARCH 24.

*Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.—PSALM lxxxi. 10.*

To this agree the words of our Saviour—"Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." We cannot ask too freely, nor too much. He is ever more willing to hear, than we to ask, and he has assured us, "that every one that asketh receiveth." And we are encouraged to make large requests. "Open thy mouth wide"—do not ask a small matter, but ask whatsoever you will, and it shall be done unto you. We cannot ask too largely, for God is a liberal giver; "He giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." He does not cast up to us his benefits as men are wont to do, nor does he upbraid us with our ingratitude, though we well deserve it; but he keeps on giving, notwithstanding our ingratitude, and though he may make us sensible of it for our own sakes, (thankfulness being a chief part of our happiness) yet does he not reproach us for it, nor withdraw his favour on account of it. No; He is kind to the unthankful and the evil. "He knoweth our frame—He remembereth that we are but dust;" and though nine of the lepers never returned to give glory to God, it does not appear that God withdrew the benefit of healing from them. Happy was it indeed for him who was made sensible of the mercy, and was made willing to acknowledge it. But his thankfulness was an additional mercy. Let us go "boldly then unto a throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,"—"not doubting nor disputing, but rather giving of thanks."

## MARCH 25.

*They sat down at thy feet ; every one shall receive of thy words.—*

DEUTERONOMY xxxiii. 3.

THIS was fulfilled in the person of Christ, when Mary sat at his feet to hear his words, having done that better part which was not to be taken from her. And truly, what better choice can we make than to sit at Christ's feet, and hear the words of everlasting life. This is our first enjoyment whatever we may think, and it is that which should be sacrificed to no other, for there is nothing of so much importance to us as to possess our souls in peace ; and this can only be by keeping in remembrance the things which we have learned, knowing of whom we have learned them. It is our privilege moreover to have a Remembrancer who will not suffer us to forget them, but will ever be reminding us of the things which belong unto our peace. That Remembrancer is the Holy Spirit of Promise, of whom Christ speaks, when he tells us, that he "will send us another Comforter who shall abide with us for ever, even the Spirit of truth, who shall guide us into all truth." Were it not for this, we should be most desolate, inasmuch as we should forget all the instructions that we have received at his feet, and should be nothing the better, but rather the worse. But by the continual indwelling of the Holy Ghost, given unto us, we are continually kept in remembrance of these things, lest at any time we should let them slip ; and, however fallacious may be our own hearts, and our own memories as to spiritual things, yet God the Holy Ghost will overrule all to his glory and to our comfort, humbling us, and exalting Christ in us.



## MARCH 26.

*Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.—*  
1 CORINTHIANS i. 24.

THE less we have to do with our ourselves, or with our sufferings the better. It is not our sufferings that can save us—It is the cross of Christ, which is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. The less therefore we dwell on our own particular case, and the more we look away from it to the general doctrine, the better it will be for us. Not that we can do this of ourselves. It is God the Holy Ghost only, who can lift us off ourselves, and enable us to look unto Jesus, according as it is written—“Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” There is a depth and a simplicity at the same time in the doctrine of Christ far above our natural apprehension; it is Christ the wisdom of God; and there is a power also attending the preaching of the Cross of Christ, which will attend no other preaching. It is to them that perish, foolishness—but to them that are saved, it is “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” There is no greater evidence of spirituality either in ourselves or in others, than the estimation in which the simple doctrine is held, in preference to any mixture of it with our own experience. It is not the cross which we bear, but the cross of Christ himself that must save us.

## MARCH 27.

*The wind bloweth where it listeth.*—JOHN iii. 8.

THERE is nothing more unaccountable than the operations of the Spirit upon the hearts of men. Though he is ever willing to testify of Christ, and of his perfect salvation, yet there are times when it is profitable for us to feel our own self-emptiness, and when of consequence his influences are withdrawn to let us feel it. Still we retain an apprehension of the faith as it is in Christ, and rely on him for all that accompanies salvation. But we have not so lively an apprehension of the benefits of believing as we could wish, nor are our *feelings* so alive to the subject. It is at such seasons, and under such circumstances that Satan would get an advantage of us, though we are not ignorant of his devices—by persuading us that we are not so much in favour as we were, and that things are not so well with us as in times past. But he that has promised to bring light out of darkness, and to make crooked things straight, soon recovers us out of the temptation, and shews us that these visitations have no other end but to convince us of our own utter state of helplessness and dependence, and the divine sovereignty of the operations of the ever blessed Spirit of God. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof;”—we are sensible of the effect, though we understand not the cause, nor can “tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth,” why it is commenced, nor why it is withdrawn. “So is every one that is born of the Spirit.” He is well aware of the power and presence of the Spirit of God, but he cannot account for his operations at all times; but he is satisfied with the promise, that “the Spirit which is upon him shall not depart from him, from henceforth and for ever.”

## MARCH 28.

*The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save ; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear.—ISAIAH lix. 1.*

THIS is true, both politically and personally. We cannot be in any condition, in which the hand of the Lord will not reach us. We may be on the very brink of ruin and rebellion, and yet the Lord is able to deliver us, and will deliver us, if we call upon him. And thanks be to his name, there are still a few, whose "garments are made white in the blood of the Lamb," and, who have an interest in the court of heaven, to stay his wrath, and to turn away the plague, as did Phineas. We have still a few who know that the Lord reigneth, and who appeal unto him in this contest of human passions, to decide the controversy, between those that are opposed to all change, and those who like nothing but change. "Neither is the Lord's ear heavy, that it cannot hear"—for Christ has given us free access to the Father through his name, and has "encouraged us to come boldly unto a throne of grace" in all our difficulties, public or private. 'For he has commanded that prayers and intercessions, with giving of thanks, be made for kings, and all in authority : that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.' And he that hath commanded us to pray, hath promised to hear our prayers, and will hear them—For this is the confidence that we have in him ; if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us ; and we know, that if he hears us, we have the petitions that we desired of him. Let us therefore, in this confidence, look up unto him.

## MARCH 29.

*That the body of sin might be destroyed.*—ROMANS vi. 6.

SIN is not to be overcome in detail, but the principle of it is to be rooted out in the first instance, that is—we are to seek for the pardon of all sin, and of ourselves as sinners; we are not to wish for the pardon of this or that particular sin, but of all sin—the whole body of sin, that it may be destroyed. And this is done, not in detail, but at once. We are made partakers of the benefits of Christ's victory, and by his power sin is cast out. We are acquitted of all guilt, and an entrance is administered unto us abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Not that this is effected without many a struggle with our own legality. But so far as we believe at all, it must be a universal belief. "The blood of Jesus Christ," either "cleanseth from all sin," or from none at all. We are either pardoned completely, or not at all; and we cannot be too free in our belief of Christ's love, nor can our faith be too comprehensive in its objects. It should embrace all that we are the subjects of, and as we are sinners not partially, but entirely, so should our faith be entire, and take in the whole compass of our infirmities. This is the only way to get rid of particular grievances, by casting them in one body upon the Lord, that he may sustain us. While there is one in reserve that we think we can contend with ourselves, we are so far under the law, and are sure to be overcome. But thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ.



## MARCH 30.

*Christ is all, and in all.*—COLOSSIANS iii. 11.

THE great difficulty in experience is so to value the work of Christ, as not to undervalue the testimony of God the Holy Ghost, seeing that it is by his operations alone upon our hearts, that we enjoy all peace and quietness of soul. And again, so to look upon the work of God the Holy Ghost, that we shall not overlook the work of Christ and his finished salvation, through which alone we have access into this grace, wherein we stand “rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.” The Arminians are guilty of the one error, and the Antinomians of the other. The one insists upon the work of the Holy Ghost within, as independantly of the work of Christ without us, and the other talks of the work of Christ without us, and of his finished salvation, without telling us how we become partakers of the benefit of that salvation, by the testimony of God the Holy Ghost in our consciences. For neither can the kingdom of God the Holy Ghost be established without us, but through the Righteousness of Christ; nor can the Righteousness of Christ be of any benefit to us, as to the peace of our consciences, without the intervention of the Holy Ghost. “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” No man can effectually call upon his name, but by the Holy Ghost, “and it is only by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, that we can be made partakers of Christ.” “Thus we become one with him, and he with us.”

## MARCH 31.

*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*—PSALM xxiii. 1.

MR. ROMAINE says well—‘Our wants are our happiness,’—and rightly managed, no doubt they are. They bring us to an exercise of dependence upon God, and we soon find, that when we have no wants, or suppose that we have none, we soon cease to call upon God with that earnestness, which we do at other times. “It is good for me that I have been in trouble,” says David, and it is certainly good for us all to have been in necessities.—Wherefore the Apostle says, “He takes pleasure in necessities for Christ’s sake; for when he is weak, then is he strong.” That is—he takes pleasure in them, for the fellowship with Christ which they bring him into, for none can take pleasure in them on their own account, nor unless he had a promise of supply. But when we experience that our wants are the certain forerunner of that supply, and that our supplies are proportioned to our wants, it greatly enhances them to us, and makes that agreeable which is in itself painful. To be under the pressure of any calamity is painful in itself, but when we find that it “works the peaceable fruits of Righteousness to them that are exercised thereby,” and that in short, it leads to the establishment of the kingdom of God in our hearts, who would not welcome a calamity which leads to a kingdom. And surely we ought not to complain of any little cross we may be under, when we reap much benefit from it: as to be brought into communion and fellowship with Christ through the grace of his Spirit.

## APRIL 1.

*Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*—2 COR. vii. 10.

How many do I see in the world, who spend their time in fretting, and live a life of misery, and yet are nothing the better but rather the worse, because they turn not to him that smiteth them nor acknowledge the Lord. We are apt to expect some benefit from affliction, and to suppose that they will have a good effect on the sufferer. But no such thing—without grace they only harden him the more, as they did Pharaoh, and make him more ripe for judgment. “The sorrow of this world worketh death.” Not so with the believer. Affliction brings him to his knees, and keeps him there. “It worketh repentance, not to be repented of,” not a transient sorrow for what has happened, but a lasting sorrow for sin. It lets him feel what he is, and what he deserves, as a sinner: and what Christ has suffered in his stead; “The just for the unjust, that he might bring him unto God.” These impressions, however, would soon wear off, were it not that God himself keeps them alive, and enables us to “live the life which we now live, in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God.” He makes known to us what Christ has done for us, and keeps us in constant remembrance of these great mercies, lest at any time we let them slip. This is all our security, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost to keep us in remembrance of our lesson, and to enable us, not only to learn but to love it. Thus it is that “godly sorrow worketh repentance, not to be repented of.” It is such a repentance, as we have no need to regret, for it makes us daily more holy and happy.

## APRIL 2.

*He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.*—2 CORINTHIANS viii. 15.

THE wisdom of providence and the hand of providence, is seen in nothing more than in the proportioning of our supplies to our wants, both in temporals and spirituals. We want a supply of grace for every day, and the promise is, that according to our day our strength shall be—so that we have never more or less than we need;—in great exercises we have a large supply, and when our wants are moderate so also are our supplies. We are apt to think indeed sometimes that our communications of grace are not according to our wants, but he that searcheth the heart, knoweth best what are our needs: and sometimes when we think ourselves most broken down and bankrupt in spirit, we have most need of humbling, and are in fact swelling with pride. No doubt also there are times when we think we might be better provided in temporals without any hurt to our spiritual prosperity, but the Lord only knows what we are really in need of, and how much he can bestow upon us without loss to our happiness. We may be persuaded of this, that we always have enough, if we only could think so, and that it is for no want of power or inclination to do us good, that we have no more.—After all, we must learn to make up our happiness principally in that kingdom which cannot be moved, and in that better part which shall not be taken from us. We may lose our property by revolutions, but we cannot lose his love, nor shall any pluck us out of his hand.



## APRIL 3.

*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*—2 CORINTHIANS ix. 15.

WE greatly undervalue the gift of God, even the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, when we doubt of his bestowing upon us any other mercy. For “he that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” It is from disparaging thoughts of Christ, that we doubt of any other benefit, even of the gift of the Spirit, seeing that God has given us such incontrovertible testimony of his love to us in the gift of his Son, who came not merely to minister unto them which should be heirs of salvation, but to suffer for them, and to fulfil all righteousness in them: and in short to take their place in the scale of creation, and to do and endure what ought to have been done and suffered by them. This was much more than any office of ministration, however gracious. It was a service of substitution, and implied more love than we are capable of conceiving, inasmuch as we neither know the infinite demerit of sin, nor the transcendent value of that righteousness which he wrought out on our behalf. We may well say then—“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” Thanks be unto him indeed for providing us a substitute to suffer in our stead, and that substitute his only begotten Son. Thanks be unto him for the gift of Righteousness, and that abundance of grace which is the consequence of that gift. For all grace comes in and through Jesus Christ; and having Christ, we have all things pertaining unto life and unto godliness. Thanks be unto him therefore for all.

## APRIL 4.

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem : they shall prosper that love thee.—*

PSALM CXXii. 6.

WE are certainly bound by every inducement to pray for the Church of Christ, and yet how grievously do we neglect it. How many petitions do we put up for ourselves, for one that we offer in behalf of the church ; and yet perhaps those prayers that we make for others are more productive even to ourselves than such as we offer up on our own behalf. Such prayers certainly tend above all other means to give us an interest in the affairs of others, and if they had no other effect than that of counteracting our own selfishness, they would even in this point be exceedingly desirable ; but when we consider that these are the prayers which more than all others call down blessings upon ourselves, we have a double inducement to indulge in them. “ They shall prosper that love thee.” What more can we require, even upon a selfish principle to induce us to take an interest in the prosperity of the church. With its prosperity we also shall prosper,—but at all events we have the promise of God’s blessing in praying for it. We may well take shame to ourselves, and I do take shame to myself this day for the selfishness of my prayers. May the Lord the Spirit lead us into a better spirit of prayer, even of prayer and supplication for all saints, as well as for ministers, in our daily petitions.

## APRIL 5.

*Because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.*—JOSHUA x. 42.

THIS is given as the reason why Joshua prevailed against the nations of the land of Canaan ; and this is the reason why armies or individuals prevail at this day. It is because the Lord fights for them, that they prevail ; and surely may we say,—Except the Lord had been on our side, they had swallowed us up quickly, so wrathfully were they displeased at us ; but God will maintain the cause of his people, and the more unreservedly they commit their concerns to him, the more they will prosper in all that they undertake. It is said—“ Look, whatsoever he doeth it shall prosper,” and it does prosper—whatsoever the righteous doeth in dependance on God ; Lord, enable us so to trust in thee, that we may not be disquieted in vain, nor “ take thought for ourselves, what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, nor wherewithal we shall be clothed : ” nor be of a doubtful mind—but rather go forward in the full assurance of faith, like the servant Joshua, according to thy word. “ Be thou strong and of good courage ; fear not, neither be dismayed ; ” for the Lord it is that fighteth for thee. “ He will not fail thee nor forsake thee.” “ Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief,” and make us thus to go forward trusting in thee, and experiencing day by day thy faithfulness and truth : experiencing the blessedness of believing thy word, and of relying with the most perfect confidence on the fulfilment of it, knowing that it is guaranteed by the faithfulness of a covenant God, sealed by the blood of Christ, and insured by his righteousness. For all the promises of God are yea and amen in him, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## APRIL 6.

*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*—MATTHEW vi. 33.

THE doctrines of grace and providence are intimately connected with one another, and yet the doctrine of providence is always to be held subordinate to the doctrines of grace. “We are to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” These are to be the principal objects of our anxiety; we are not to disturb ourselves about other things, so as to let them put these out of our minds. No—these are ever to hold the first place in our thoughts and affections. We are to seek them in the first place, and make them the principal object of all our endeavours; and that not only in our own hearts, but also in the hearts of others. It is incumbent upon us to endeavour to promote the kingdom of God in the hearts of all about us; not by self-willed exertions, but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, letting our requests be made known unto God. And the promise is, that the peace of God shall keep our hearts always through Christ Jesus. We shall not only be taken care of, but we shall know it, so that we shall enjoy the most perfect tranquillity of mind. We shall be at rest as to all our outward affairs, having committed them all, along with our souls, in the faith of a better righteousness than our own to the keeping of him as to a faithful Creator.

## APRIL 7.

*And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments.*—1 JOHN iii. 22.

THE greatest blessing we can ask, is happiness : and what is happiness but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to make us happy by testifying of Christ, and of his finished salvation. There is abundant matter of thankfulness in the person and work of Christ. All we want is the *testimony* of God the Holy Ghost, to that fulness of salvation, which is in him to make us perfectly happy. The secret of happiness lies in a very small compass. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." These are simple words, but they contain the whole sum and substance of the Gospel. These believed, "are able to make us wise unto salvation : " and to live in the belief of these, is to be substantially happy. It is only by losing sight of these truths that we can ever be otherwise ; and it is "God the Holy Ghost who can alone keep us in remembrance of them." He is therefore called the Remembrancer, because he brings the words of Christ to our remembrance, and this is the most desirable office he can perform for us upon earth. "Evermore give us this bread,"

## APRIL 8.

*Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.*

—GALATIANS I. 4.

HERE are three things implied in this Scripture, first, that this present world is an evil world ; secondly, that we are to expect deliverance from it : and thirdly, the means of that deliverance through the forgiveness of sins, according to the will of God, even our Father. That the world is evil, is declared also by another Apostle, who says, “ That the whole world lieth in wickedness ; ” and truly, when we look about us, we can be at no loss for abundant proofs of this fact ; wickedness abounds everywhere, not only outward wickedness, which is the least of it, but spiritual wickedness ; a rejection of Christ, and his righteousness ; a contempt of his word and spirit, and a perversion of his ordinances to worldly purposes and carnal ends. From all these things we look for deliverance, because God has promised it. He has promised “ to redeem us from *all* iniquity,” and though not to take us out of the world, yet to keep us from the evil ; and how is all this to be effected, but by the pardoning efficacy of the blood of Christ. “ This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” We may fight against the Spirit of the world in our own strength as long as we like, but we shall never succeed, until we have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. We shall never advance one step towards conquest, till we are “ enabled to go forth in the strength of the Lord, and to make mention of his righteousness, even of his only.” This is the only thing that can give us *cheerfulness* to proceed in our course. “ Be of good cheer,” says our Lord, “ *I have overcome the world.*”

## APRIL 9.

*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.—HEBREWS ix. 14.*

A BELIEF in the blood of Christ, is our cleansing from all sin, is the foundation of all spirituality, and of all Christian worship. We cannot serve God acceptably without it. For we cannot come to him heartily, unless we believe that he is revealed to us, and “without shedding of blood is no remission.” The value of the blood of Christ is seen in this, that even that blood which was only typical of his, had the power of protecting the Israelites from the plagues of the Egyptians. How much more then shall the very blood of Christ protect us from the plagues of the world. Let us only profess it, and we shall surely fully experience it, that it is not only sufficient, but more than sufficient, as a security for all the evils of life; inasmuch as it also delivers from death. There are they that overcome Satan, who do it by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. On such the second death has no power. They triumph over death by the death of Christ. Death has stung itself to death, in his death; “and life and immortality are brought to light by his resurrection. To him be glory for ever and ever.” Amen.



## APRIL 10.

*So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.—*

GALATIANS iii. 9.

THERE is no blessing to be compared with the forgiveness of sins, which comes to us in a way of believing, not for believing, but in and through Jesus Christ apprehended by faith, or as the Scripture expresses it, “revealed from faith to faith.” For his righteousness, though one in itself, is not one in the revelation of it, but we daily grow through the gracious influences of the ever blessed Spirit of Christ, in the apprehension of his blood and righteousness, or as it is elsewhere expressed, “we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” And a blessed knowledge it is. It consists not in a speculative apprehension of any new doctrine, but in a growing sense of our own sinfulness, and of our own worthiness in the person of Christ. “Thus Abraham walked with God.” He did not believe God was his friend, for anything done or suffered by himself, but he simply believed God when he declared “unto him the forgiveness of sins, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” This is the blessing spoken of by David, when he says, “Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin.” And beyond comparison, it is the greatest blessing we can be made partakers of, inasmuch as it includes all others. We are brought “into a state of acceptance with God, become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” and are entitled to all the privileges of children, both in prospect and present enjoyment.



## APRIL 11.

*He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man.*—PSALM civ. 14.

ONE cannot behold the progress of spring, without acknowledging the wisdom and goodness of God to us his unworthy creatures; and when we consider that all these benefits, even the least, are secured to us by the blood of Christ, and are in fact the fruits of his sufferings and death, they become doubly endeared in value to the believer. "All things are for the elect's sake, and the elect hold all things in Christ, for as "without him was not any thing made that was made," so much more is not anything continued to us but on his account. All the blessings of providence, and the renewal of the face of nature, is entirely the fruit of Christ's continuing to intercede for us in heaven, and "to plead the cause of his people before the throne of God." Otherwise all things are under the curse, and the curse would be executed forthwith upon that world, which "lieth in wickedness." The season of spring may serve to remind us also of those seasons of renewal in our own souls, when God is pleased to command his blessing, and to revive his work in the midst. We too are subject to the winter of the soul, when our spiritual activities lie dormant for a time, to convince us perhaps that the principle of life is not in ourselves, but that we must be dependent entirely on the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon our souls, for the renewing of our spiritual vigour, and that "without him we can do nothing." He renews the face of nature, and he renews the life of our spirit. "To him be glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

## APRIL 12.

*Be ye thankful.*—COLOSSIANS iii. 15.

THE great art of happiness is to look at our mercies, and to look away from our miseries, and to endeavour as far as possible to forget them. We shall never be without them, as long as we are in the body; and therefore our wisdom is to learn how to manage them, that they may minister to our happiness. And this is to be done by making use of them to help us in forgetting ourselves. They make it necessary for us to live out of ourselves, and to be continually looking away from ourselves; not dwelling on any thing that befalls us, but resting wholly and solely on the promise of Christ concerning us, that "he will never leave us nor forsake us." This is to be done by taking God at his word, not doubting nor disputing, but rather giving of thanks; boldly believing what God has promised, and relying on him for the fulfilment of it. This seems easy, but try it. None but the Spirit of Christ can enable us either to see this truth in its simplicity, or to embrace it. It looks like a mere truism, but it is a profound truth. To forget ourselves and to remember Christ in all things is the secret of happiness. And well may we make light of our sufferings, when we compare what we endure with what we deserve. They are not worth a moments consideration. Let us learn therefore to look away from them, and let us pray God the Holy Ghost to help us in this happy act of living above ourselves, yea to lift us off ourselves and place us upon that one sure foundation which abideth for ever. "Look unto me, saith the Lord, and be ye saved. Even so, Lord Jesus."

## APRIL 13.

*Looking unto Jesus.*—HEBREWS xii. 2.

THIS ought to be our continual watch-word. It is what we are continually called upon to practise, if we would be happy,—to look away from ourselves, and from all that concerns us, to Jesus Christ. Not that we can be insensible to the common feelings of nature, but these are made subservient to this great end of our being—namely, our coming to Christ. They are our schoolmasters to bring us to him. Whatever we meet with in the world, either of evil or good, is so far only a benefit, as it answers this end, and nothing is really an evil that answers this purpose. We ought to give thanks for all things that help us heavenwards, and help to teach us our lesson, to live more by faith, and less by sense, more by what is promised, and less by what we see, for in this respect we must learn to lay down our own experience, and to look away from what is visible, to the invisible things of God. We must learn not to dwell on anything disagreeable, but to overcome its discouraging effects by looking to Jesus, and by believing that he is able to overrule it, yea to bring good out of evil; and to make those things, which appear most contrary to us, and to his promise, redound most to his glory and to the fulfilment of his word. We have numberless instances in Scripture of this; numberless cases in which, if the persons concerned in them, had looked at the circumstances instead of believing the word, they would have been overwhelmed with despair. But it is the faith of the resurrection of Jesus Christ that gives a cheerful aspect to all things, yea even to death itself.

## APRIL 14.

*This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*—PSALM cxviii. 24.

THIS is true of the Christian Sabbath. It is a day of the Lord's creation, and much to be remembered before the Lord, because on that day he completed our redemption, whereof God gave us witness in that he raised him from the dead—now no more to return to corruption. And by virtue of this resurrection he also begets us again unto a lively hope, that we may worship him in spirit and in truth—in the full assurance of our sins being forgiven, and ourselves justified in the sight of God. But it is not only true of the Christian Sabbath generally. There are particular days which the Lord seems to consecrate by his presence, rendering these days to be much remembered by us, as days in which he has made all his goodness to pass before us, proclaiming his name unto us, as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, passing by iniquity and transgression and sin, though he will by no means clear the guilty without a ransom. But he hath found a ransom for us, and at such times he lets us know it by the profound peace “shed abroad in our consciences, and the sense of love in our hearts. For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace,” and these constitute the real Sabbath—a day of rest from legal labour, and self-righteous efforts—a day to be much remembered before the Lord, for delivering us from more than Egyptian bondage.



## APRIL 15.

*The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.*—JAMES iv. 5.

BUT, blessed be God, the Spirit which we have received is above all envy—for we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given unto us of God. And what are they? Why, the unsearchable riches of Christ—all good things in heaven and on earth, for all things are ours in title, and should be ours in possession, if they were good for us. There is nothing too great for God to bestow upon us if it were really good. Having given us “his only begotten Son, he will with him also freely give us all things.” Let no believer therefore suppose that it is for want of good-will on the part of God, if he withholds from us any manner of thing that *seems* to be good. It is not that he does not love us perfectly, but that he loves us too well to bestow upon us any thing that might have the effect of alienating our hearts from him. What a quiet does it bring into our minds respecting all temporal things, when we believe that they are at the absolute disposal of our Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, that all honour is given unto him in heaven and on earth, and that he is perfectly willing to bestow upon us whatever is good for us. Hence it is, that we can pray with confidence to him, as he did to the Father, knowing that he heareth us alway; and if we know that he heareth us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. Yea, Lord, there is nothing so great that we would not venture to ask it of thee, and nothing so little, that we would not desire to confess it unto thee. “For thine is the kingdom, the power and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

## APRIL 16.

*It is because we have taken no bread.*—MATTHEW xvi. 7.

How apt we all are to reflect upon ourselves for neglect in natural things, and to overlook our much greater neglects in spiritual things. How little does it signify whether we have made due provision for the wants of the body compared with the wants of the soul; and yet how do we reflect upon ourselves for giving heed to false doctrine, or for not holding fast the doctrines of righteousness, “and giving heed to seducing lies and hypocrisy”—the doctrines of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? For, be it remembered, that we have both Pharisees and Sadducees at this present day—men who speak lies in hypocrisy, and beguile unstable souls. Such are they who disturb our peace with the doctrines of self-righteousness and legality, and teach us to look for anything but sin in ourselves, or for anything but comfort in Christ. He is the fountain of all blessedness, and “whosoever cleaveth unto him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” It behoves us therefore to beware of any, who teach otherwise, and to have our hearts established with grace, not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. Lord, grant us evermore this grace.

## APRIL 17.

*His going forth is prepared as the morning.*—HOSEA vi. 3.

HE shall come unto us as the rain, as the early and the latter rain, upon the earth. The time of our refreshings from the presence of the Lord are all appointed. It is the Lord knowing his seasons, and his purposes of grace towards us, and he will not let either fail. He will return at the time appointed, and bestow his blessing upon us. Yea, he will leave a blessing behind him, even a meat-offering and a drink-offering unto our God. This meat-offering is the righteousness of Christ, and the drink-offering is the blood of Christ, which he hath shed for us, and having these, we can never be at a loss for subjects of thankfulness. They are a continual subject of praise in the absence of all other comforts, but when to these are *added* other blessings, they then become blessings indeed, and are enjoyed as *evidences* of the favour of God. Thus whatsoever we receive as effects of Christ's righteousness partake of the value of it, and have a worth infused into them which they do not possess in themselves. They are the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God. Grant us evermore to enjoy all our benefits in this covenant relation.

## APRIL 18.

*I speak concerning Christ and the Church.—EPHESIANS V. 32.*

THE union betwixt Christ and his people, is set forth in Scripture by various images, but by none more distinctly than by the relation of husband and wife. For as the husband is the head of the wife, even so is Christ the head of his body the Church, and is as much interested in its prosperity and well-doing as the husband is in that of his wife. There cannot be a more endearing relationship. For no one ever hated his own flesh, (and the husband and wife are one flesh) but loveth it and cherisheth it, so Christ also the Church. He takes care of us, when we cannot take care of ourselves. He presents us with the blessings of his goodness, and he endows us with all his possessions:—or as an excellent divine expresses it—Christ being ours, whatever he is, and has, become ours also. It is a blessed consideration that we have such a dowry, for the residue of the spirit being with him, we become also partakers of this benefit. We receive out of his fulness not only grace for grace, but the fountain of grace itself. “Whosoever believeth on me, saith he, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” This he spake, it is added, of the spirit, which they that believed on him should receive. And it is this gift of the Holy Ghost which crowns all others. He it is that puts us into possession of the good things of the kingdom. He consummates the marriage, and installs us in all the privileges of the marriage state. They that are joined to the Lord are one spirit. They are partakers of his spirit, even of that self-same Spirit, which in all its fulness dwells in the presence of Christ. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.



## APRIL 19.

*There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel: All came to pass.—JOSHUA xxi. 45.*

THIS is a good testimony, and it behoves every Christian to record in his own experience the fulfilment of God's word. How many times have we cried unto the Lord, and been delivered? How many things have appeared overwhelming to us at *the time*, which he has dispersed, and turned our fears into matters of thanksgiving, "giving us the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness?" It is our shame to be very forgetful of past benefits, and to keep ourselves too much fixed on present grievances; where as we ought rather to dwell on our past deliverances, and endeavour thereby to divert our mind from the contemplation of what is before us. Looking at the things which are seen is the great evil of our lives, and fearing them as the world looks upon them, not through the clear medium of God's word, but through the hazy atmosphere of our own apprehensions. One thing we may be sure of, that not one thing shall fail of all the good things that the Lord hath spoken. Some of the promises may appear too great to expect the fulfilment of them—but we need not be afraid of trusting them. We need not be afraid of committing ourselves, body and soul, for time and for eternity, into his hands, who hath said—"I will keep thee night and day, lest any hurt thee." Yea, Lord Jesus, we believe that thou wilt "keep us in perfect peace, because our minds are stayed on thee," and because thou hast enabled us to put our trust in thee.

## APRIL 20.

*God setteth the solitary in families.*—PSALM lxxviii. 6.

IT is the part of a good shepherd to gather his sheep, not suffer them to be dispersed abroad—and this Jesus Christ fulfils toward his people by gathering them in families, uniting them in his service, and setting up his worship among them. Nor is there a greater blessing than when a few Christians are providentially united. They become more formidable than an army with banners, because the Lord is among them, as upon the holy hill of Sion, and when his people were gathered in Jerusalem. Yea, much more, for they have now the true temple, “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,”—a tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not men, even the body of Christ, as the seat of their worship according to that which is written, “The time cometh, yea, and now is, when neither in Jerusalem nor in this mountain shall they worship the Father, but they that worship him shall worship him in spirit and in truth. For such the Father seeks to worship him.” It is by a union of spirit in Christ that we become joint worshippers of him—and it is a great benefit when our hearts are thus united to call upon his name. For where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is He in the midst of them.

## APRIL 21.

*But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.—*

JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

THIS was a good resolution of Joshua's, and it is equally desirable for us to come to the same determination. Thus when our Lord put it to his disciples—"Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life." And may we not say the same, when under the influence of unbelief, or of temporary disappointment, or from whatever cause we may be tempted to turn away from the Lord, does it not behove us to reflect with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" If we give up our confidence in thee, what other refuge can we find, "for thou hast the words of eternal life." Thou also canst give us a promise of life such as we may rely on. For the world will promise us life in its own way, but then it is only a temporal life after all. "The pleasures of sin are but for a season." Self-righteousness will also promise us life, but it will deceive us at the last. "For there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved, but that of Jesus Christ." The residue of the spirit and of spiritual life is with him—He killeth and he maketh alive, and unless he give us life, it is in vain that we seek it elsewhere. Well may we resolve therefore with Joshua—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." It is the only profitable service, the only service which will answer any good purpose in the end. For "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

## APRIL 22.

*If God be for us, who can be against us.*—ROMANS viii. 31.

THIS is the Christian's consolation. He knows that God is on his side,—perfectly reconciled by the death of his Son, he is engaged to befriend him, and “if God be for us, who can be against us. Yea, though men rise up against us, yet shall they not prevail.”—For we shall see our desire upon our enemies, but more especially upon that greatest of all enemies—Satan. The God of peace shall tread him under our feet, and teach us to triumph because of the truth. He shall enable us to believe in him as *our* God and Father in Jesus, and to walk with him as beloved children, not doubting his love, nor disputing his bestowing upon us any manner of thing that is good. There is a great comfort in realizing the covenant life of Christ. It was by this faith that Abraham walked with God. He believed the promise, and therefore he was called the friend of God, and God was his friend indeed. He suffered no man to do him violence, but reprov'd even kings for his sake. And shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him? “Yea, I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily.” He may seem indeed, at times, to bear long with them, but still he will avenge them speedily. “Though the vision tarry therefore, yet wait for it: for in the end it will come and not tarry. Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

## APRIL 23.

*It is the Lord : let him do what seemeth him good.—*

1 SAMUEL iii. 18.

To see the hand of God in all things, prosperous or adverse, is the perfection of happiness. To believe that he is interested for us, and that nothing befalls us but by his permission, I might say his appointment, is the way to enjoy all things. We may even give thanks in this way for untoward circumstances, believing that nothing shall befall us, but what is for our good and his glory. It is by this faith that we reconcile all things to ourselves, and ourselves to all things. Nothing comes amiss that comes with the clear impression of divine providence upon it. It is by thinking things have happened by accident, that we are disturbed by them, or that they are the fruits of mismanagement on our part. But no sooner do we see that we are nothing in the business of managing our own affairs, but that they are all managed for us by infinite wisdom and almighty power, guided by never-failing love ; than we become reconciled to the ways of God altogether, and accept all things as a part of that dispensation of good, which he has ordained for us. Little do we know, how much good arises out of apparent evil. It is only by a long acquaintance with the cross that we reap all its benefits. Afterward it “worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby”—not at the time perhaps, nor for some time after, but in the end it is sure to produce its proper fruit : and this is all the fruit to take away our sin, to deaden us to the world, and to make us more alive to God, and to the things of God.

## APRIL 24.

*I say unto this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this and he doeth it.—*

MATTHEW viii. 9.

How simple and convincing are the arguments of faith, of a faith founded on the word of God and begotten by the Spirit of God. He suggests arguments to us, as he did to the Canaanitish woman, far beyond the subtilty of nature, and yet bearing on them all the simplicity of truth,—“Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.” Who could have suggested such an answer but the spirit of grace and supplication who will take no denial? and who could resist such an argument, intending at the same time to bestow the blessing?—“O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee, even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.” Thus too with the Centurion. He urged home upon Christ the greatness of the divine power compared with all human authority however absolute, and would take no denial founded on a want of power to grant his request, but rested his petition entirely on the goodwill of him to whom he addressed it,—“Speak the word only.” How desirable it is thus always to come to a throne of grace thoroughly impressed with the power of God to relieve us, and to do for us whatever we desire of him; and how little do we know the state of our own heart, when we suppose that we do not doubt it. There is nothing more difficult, nay impossible, than to realize the power of Christ but by the Spirit; for no man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.



## APRIL 25.

*If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.*

—2 TIMOTHY ii. 13.

IT is a blessed consideration for believers that the *faithfulness* of God is not dependent on their faith, but rather their faith on the faithfulness of God. Our faith cannot fail, because his faithfulness cannot fail. —“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way for your escape.” But even should our faith fail, as undoubtedly it often appears to do, yet is he faithful, He cannot and will not deny himself. Nay, when we least perceive it, often his care of us is most conspicuous—in seasons of backsliding and unbelief. Jonah was regarded as much in the whale’s belly, as when he was preaching at Nineveh; and we are perhaps never safer, than when we seem lost to all sense and reason. “The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked, he turneth it upside down.” Let us endeavour therefore always to realize this in our minds, that God is faithful. “Heaven and earth shall pass away,” saith our Saviour, “but My word shall not pass away.” Oh for more faith in the faithfulness of a covenant God. This it is which feeds our faith, but is not fed by it. We can add nothing to God, but receive all from him. To him be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

## APRIL 26.

*My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*—MATTHEW xi. 30.

IT is well to be reminded sometimes, that the religion of Jesus is a happy religion ; that if it has its sufferings it has also its consolations ; otherwise we are apt to be cast down, and to think it consists of nothing but crosses. Christ himself however, assures us, that his yoke is easy. It is made so, first by submission to his will—secondly, by the subjugation of our natural pride. “Learn of me,” says he, “for I am meek and lowly in heart;” but principally by that inward peace and consolation which we receive from the assurance that God is at peace with us, that he has no ill-will towards us, and that our crosses are intended not for our punishment, but for our eventual establishment in the ways of righteousness. “Afterward it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness.” It is this sense of God’s being in friendship with us that sweetens all our crosses, and takes the sting out of all our sufferings, for what signifies any little suffering in this life (even suppose it lasted our life long, which few crosses do), when we know that it shall end in eternal glory. But when we consider that God is able to remove any cross in a moment, and that he only continues it for good, and will not continue it one moment longer than it is good. Oh how does this consideration serve to reconcile us to it, and incline us to submit to it so long as it shall last. It comes from God and leads to Him.



## APRIL 27.

*That take, and give unto them for me and thee.—MATTHEW xvii. 27.*

WHAT a singular way of paying tribute, and what a singular instance of the payment of tribute. Here we have the Lord of heaven and earth paying tribute to one of his creatures, and shewing his divine sovereignty at the same time, by the singular manner in which the means were provided. "Go, cast a hook into the sea, and when thou hast caught a fish, look in his mouth, and thou shalt find a piece of money." If any one now-a-days were to adopt such a method, what an enthusiast would he be thought, and yet there is no doubt, that according to our faith it shall be done unto us, and nothing, shall be impossible to him that believeth. All we want is, more faith in God's word, which is as good a warrant now for expecting any thing promised, as Christ's command was to Peter for casting the hook into the sea in expectation of catching a fish with money in its mouth. We read these things as matters of course, and think it was very well for Peter to do as he was bid by Christ himself—but we forget that it required just as much faith in Peter *then*, as it would do in us *now*, and that it must have seemed quite as extraordinary to him then, as it might appear extravagant in us now, to expect such an issue to such an adventure. Lord, increase our faith in thy power and providence, and deliver us from that lying heresy, that would say all thy wonders of grace have ceased.

## APRIL 28.

*And watch in the same with thanksgiving.*—COLOSSIANS iv. 2.

IT is remarkable that the exhortation to prayer is so often, in Scripture, conjoined with thanksgiving. Our exercise of faith for future mercies, is encouraged when we are sensible in some manner of those that are past; it is the same faith which apprehends the one as the other, and believes God to be the author of both. We pray with an increased degree of confidence when our hearts are in tune for praise; the sense of past mercies, being a principal encouragement for the future. So saith the Apostle, "Who hath delivered, and in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." It is past deliverance, which forms one of the best grounds for believing that he will yet deliver me; so says the believer: and so faith is fed by thanksgiving, and thanksgiving is again called forth by the exercise of faith. It is of inconceivable benefit to the believer to be continually examining his mercies, and making them a matter of thankfulness toward God. "It strengthens and encourages his faith, and enables him to go on his way rejoicing, and giving of thanks." The joy of the Lord is then his strength, and he finds fresh encouragement every day to trust more to a covenant God, who has borne him, and carried, and in whom he trusts he will yet carry him, until he has finally delivered him. Even so, Lord Jesus.

## APRIL 29.

*Happy is that people, that is in such a case : yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord..—PSALM cxliv. 15.*

WE are sometimes apt to think that it is not so well with them that fear the Lord as with others ; that they meet with more disagreeable things, and are subject to more vexations than worldly people. But let God be true, and every man a liar ! Let us believe his word, rather than our own perverted experience, and when we are tempted to think harshly of God, let us call to mind this Scripture, “ Happy is the people who have the Lord for their God.” Happy indeed ! For he has undertaken for their body and soul. He is the Saviour of the body, “ He healeth all our diseases.” He also provides for our spiritual wants, and gives us all things pertaining unto life and unto godliness. Yea, unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. We may therefore safely trust our all in his hands. We may give ourselves with the most perfect safety to his keeping, for he has promised to keep us night and day, lest any hurt us ; and whatever we may be tempted to think at times of peculiar discouragement, yet we may be sure that our happiness consists in his keeping us, and in our keeping near unto him ; in our drawing unto him and his ways with full purpose of heart, and forsaking our own carnal thoughts and undervaluing apprehensions of his love. Lord Jesus, grant us thy Holy Spirit to dwell in us, and to keep us in the lively apprehension of the benefit of believing on thee, and of living in constant communion with thee. Let us not so far disparage thy presence, as to suppose that any pleasure we can derive from the world, is to be compared with thy peace.

## APRIL 30.

*Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.*—HEBREWS xii. 1.

THE two great prevailing sins, and those which most disturb our comfort, perhaps, are care and fear. Some are more subject to the one, and some to the other, as legality, or self-righteousness prevails; the one, namely legality, inclining more to fear, being indeed the spirit of bondage again to fear; the other, disposing us rather to the indulgence of unnecessary care. For when we do not clearly see the ground of our benefits, and how all things are freely bestowed upon us for what Christ has merited on our behalf, we naturally give way to notions of self-preservation, and distrust of providence. But when we are thoroughly possessed with the glory of this surety—righteousness, we see at the same time, that it so far transcends all other gifts and benefits, that in having this, we possess all things, and that nothing is too great, or too good to expect, after laying hold on the hope of righteousness by faith. These two—legality, and self-righteousness, are at the bottom of all our disquietudes. The Lord preserve us from both, and not only make us, but *keep* us alive to his truth, “That we may indeed live the life which we now live in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God,” and may have our hearts established with grace, not with maxims of worldly prudence, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

## MAY 1.

*Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth  
that I desire beside thee.*—PSALM lxxiii. 25.

IT is a good symptom when our desires are toward heavenly things, for they are sure to be gratified. "Open thy mouth wide," says God, "and I will fill it." Our amplest desires are not too large for him to satisfy, and we are sure that desires after heavenly things are according to his will, because he hath commanded us, "not to set our affections on things on earth, but on things in heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Therefore we may confidently expect the fulfilment of our largest expectations, and even more than we expect ; for it is written, "That he is able to do for us, abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us ;" which is the power of the Holy Ghost, or spirit of Christ operating in us, in the same way as he did, when he received Christ from the dead : for he was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, and we are also declared to be the sons of God in the same way. "It is by the Spirit of the Son, crying in our hearts, Abba Father," and enabling us to look upon God as our Father ; and to trust in him as such. Yea, to call upon his name, saying, "Our Father which art in heaven." Lord, let thy Spirit evermore dwell in us, and more abundantly reveal unto us our adoption in Christ, that we may live more unto him who hath died for us, and may learn to delight ourselves in the Lord.

## MAY 2.

*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*—1 THESSALONIANS V. 18.

WE cannot desire a greater blessing than a thankful spirit, because we cannot be thankful without a cheerful impression of things around us, and that cheerfulness arises from a sense of God's favour freely bestowed upon us in the person of his Son Jesus Christ. "Now the Lord is that spirit," saith the Apostles, "And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." As if he had said, we can do nothing without the Spirit. He is the author of all good in us, and for us, and where he is, there is always a spiritual freedom and cheerfulness attending his divine influences. He gives us to look upon all things in the same light, as God looks upon them. He admits us into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, and how can we then be otherwise than cheerful, and if cheerful, then we are in the right spirit of thankfulness, for without cheerfulness, it is impossible to praise God. All those who have walked with God, have served him with joyfulness and gladness of heart for the abundance of all things. It behoves us therefore more particularly to beware of any thing that may disturb us in a gloomy view of God's providences. It is our business to resist all such impressions, as contrary to the first duty of a believer in Jesus, and a sort of high treason against this commandment of the Lord, that in everything we should give thanks, for we cannot give thanks under the influences of a melancholy or discontented spirit. Lord, grant us therefore to be of good cheer, because thou hast overcome the world.



## MAY 3.

*Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.—PSALM ii. 12.*

BLESSED indeed !—" for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," that is, personally. The Lord Jesus Christ is not only equal with God, but is God. He possesses all the attributes of the divine nature in his own person ; and he will exercise them all on our behalf. His wisdom is engaged in contriving for us,—his love in bestowing upon us whatever he sees for our good,—and his power in protecting us from all evil. For he hath triumphed over principalities and powers, making a shew of them openly.—He hath overcome Satan for us, and he has promised to overcome him in us,—yea, to make us more than conquerors through his love. This he does by revealing to us the greatness of that love, and enabling us to believe unto life everlasting. He enables us to rest upon him with the most perfect security, and to find joy and peace in believing his promises, and in waiting upon him to make them good. Blessed are all they that wait for him : they find a blessing in waiting, for they find that many promises are made good to them in the act of waiting. Their faith and patience are tried, and they become followers of them, who through those graces have inherited the promises. They thus learn contentment, for they find that in whatever state they are, God is able to make them therewith content ; and having learned contentment, they go on unto perfection, reaching after continual thankfulness, that they live to the praise of the glory of his grace who have trusted in him.

## MAY 4.

*Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*—2 THESSALONIANS ii. 16, 17.

ALL our works are appointed of God, and we ourselves are “ordained unto good works, which God hath before appointed that we should walk in them.” Our fruitfulness is of him : for without Christ we can do nothing. Well may we pray to him therefore that he would “stablish us in every good word and work,” both “the works of our hands, and the answer of our tongue is of the Lord.” He puts words in our mouths, and he has promised that the word which he has put into our mouths, which is the word of faith, “shall not depart out of our mouths from henceforth and even for ever.” We are sometimes apt to think that we may *forget*, or let slip, the things that we have learned ; but this is our security, that Christ has promised to keep us in the truth. The anointing which we have received of him abideth in us and teacheth us all things, and we need not that any man teach us ; but as the same anointing abideth with us, even so shall we remain in the truth, and abound in the faith with thanksgiving. All we want is clearer views of gospel grace to make us perfectly happy, and this he has promised us when he says—“ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”



## MAY 5.

*Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.—PSALM li. 11.*

THE presence of God is a Christian's happiness,—it is his home. God dwells in him, and he in God,—and whenever he loses a sense of this presence, he is no longer at home, whatever outward advantages he may possess, or wherever he may be. We may be in his own house, and yet not at home ; or he may be at home in the house of a stranger and in a strange land. He carries his home about with him. The presence of God goes along with him and gives him peace ; or if it goes not along with him, he feels that he is no longer at home. To realise this truth, “ God with us,” is the perfection of Christianity ; for it is only in and through Jesus Christ that God is with any one,—and it is only in his name that the Holy Spirit will act on our behalf. “ No one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost,” nor will the Holy Ghost bear witness to any one holding any other doctrine, or saying any thing else. He shall testify of me, and he does testify of Christ, when he shews us that there is no happiness in any thing, whatever outward advantages it may possess, without the presence of Christ. It is his presence that makes it what it is, enjoyable to us. Without him it is nothing.

## MAY 6.

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*—JOHN xiv. 16.

THERE cannot be a stronger proof of a Trinity of persons in the divine essence than is contained in this Scripture. Here is the person praying,—the person prayed to,—and the person prayed for: another comforter, distinct from him, even Christ, who prayed. *Christ* is himself the intercessor with the *Father* for the gift of the *Holy Ghost*. And every man has this doctrine illustrated more or less in his own experience.—We first deal with God as an absolute God until we feel our need of an intercessor; and then we have the comfort of Christ's sensible presence, till those days of fasting, when the Son of Man is taken from us, and we are led to look up for the more abiding presence of God the Holy Ghost, who finally establishes our hearts in the love of God, and in the patient waiting for Jesus Christ. I know of no way in which we can become acquainted with the doctrine of the Trinity like personal experience of their respective offices in the covenant of grace. Hereby they become known to the soul, who embraces them, and holds fast the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. To God only will be honor and glory for evermore.

## MAY 7.

*Without wrath and doubting.*—1 TIMOTHY ii. 8.

WE may well pray without wrath, since the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. It neither illustrates that righteousness, nor is it produced by it. "For the wisdom which is from above, is first pure then peaceable," that is, it first purifies the heart and then makes us peaceable; and truly without purity of heart it is not possible to be peaceable either with others, or in ourselves, for while guilt lies upon the conscience, there will be enmity in the heart. The next requisite for right prayer is, that we should pray without doubting, for he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea. Let not this man think that he shall obtain any thing of the Lord. There is undoubtedly such a thing as praying with a full confidence of being heard, and every child of God must recollect seasons when he has approached the throne of grace with such confidence. It is the confidence of a child appealing to its parent, and consists in a filial assurance that our heavenly father hears us, and will answer us according to the full import of our petitions.—"For he giveth liberally, and upbraideth not." He giveth not by measure unto us, but fulfilleth even the desires of our hearts, doing for us even beyond our expectations. And if at any time he seem to withhold from us the request of our lips, let us still remember that his delays are not denials, and that we know not what he may have in reserve for us. Let us believe him at all events, since without believing there can be no prayer, and without prayer we can obtain no blessings.

## MAY 8.

*Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.—ISAIAH lxiv. 5.*

THE joy of the Lord is indeed our strength, and it is by virtue of this that we are enabled to work righteousness; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. Yea, the kingdom of heaven itself consists of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. How blessed a thing is it therefore to be admitted a member of this kingdom, to be enabled to rejoice in the Lord according to the commandment, and to abound in the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. For what can be more to the glory of God, than that his people should rejoice, and appear with cheerful countenances before the children of men,—in nothing terrified by their adversaries, but in all things approving themselves as the people of God, chosen of him from everlasting,—made partakers of his kingdom and glory, and rejoicing in their way to it,—yea, rejoicing and working righteousness. For he that doeth righteousness, that is, acts in all things as a justified person, is righteous, even as he, Jesus, is righteous.

## MAY 9.

*I bring near my righteousness—and my salvation shall not tarry.*  
—ISAIAH xlv. 13.

THERE is nothing will bring us near to God, but his bringing near his righteousness to us. As long as we are under guilt, we naturally keep at a distance, and look upon God as an enemy. Our eye is evil, and our whole body is full of darkness. But when we are enlightened to behold the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, and to apprehend his righteousness, it makes us all that we should be, and sheds a light and a glory over all that we think or do. It gives to all our actions in short the value of that righteousness in the faith of which they are performed. Thus it was that Abraham was justified by works, for his works were done in the faith of Christ's righteousness, and partook of the merit of it, yea, derived all their merit from it. "For without faith it is impossible to please God,"—without faith in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ,—wherefore he saith "Behold, I bring near my righteousness," and as an effect thereof, "my salvation shall not tarry;" but you shall experience all the blessed effects of righteousness in the fruits of it—even those fruits of faith which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. Let us pray, therefore, that we may be kept in the lively apprehension of this righteousness, and that it may not only be brought near, but kept near to us at all times, and under all circumstances.

## MAY 10.

*And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*—MARK xiii. 37.

THE present certainly seems a peculiar time, calling upon all believers to be on their watch-tower, looking out for the coming of their Lord. And there is no better preparation for his coming, than living continually in his blood and righteousness, which is, in fact, the life we shall live in heaven. It is this which constitutes heaven, and the more we live thus, the more we are like "the spirits of just men made perfect," for our perfection will consist in this:—namely, in casting our crowns at the feet of the Saviour. Then no legal fears, nor self-righteous hopes will arise in our breasts to interrupt our supreme happiness, but we shall be perfectly willing that Christ shall have all the glory of all the grace shewed unto us. This I conceive constitutes the highest happiness of a fallen creature—to be willing to be saved entirely by grace, and he that waiteth in this spirit, in a spirit of profound self-abhorrence and humility, totally dependent on the blood of the Lamb, must always be prepared to meet him at his coming. It is not a legal but an evangelical watching that is meant—the joy of one waiting for his Lord, in perfect confidence of being accepted by him.

## MAY 11.

*God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*—MATT. xxii. 32.

WHAT a simple, yet strong and convincing argument was this : nothing could be said against it,—and yet, incontrovertible as it appears, it was such as would not have occurred but to infinite wisdom. We read and read again, but do not consider, nor is it till things are placed before us in the light of the Spirit, that we see the real simplicity, and convincing force of the Gospel. It is, indeed, the gospel of salvation, and the word of life ; for “ God is not the God of the dead but of the living,” and whosoever lives must live by him. Yea, “ we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God ;” and it is only as we receive out of that hidden fulness of life which is in him, that we are enabled to live by Him. “ For He is the fountain of life, and whosoever believeth in him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” For “ Christ is not the God of the dead but of the living.” His members are living members—He acknowledges no other. He makes them alive by his Almighty Spirit, and he keeps them alive by the same means ; and should they at any time languish, and as it were die in themselves, he revives them again, for he is “ the resurrection and the life.” He not only gives life but renews it. To him be glory for ever. Amen.

## MAY 12.

*The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*—MATT. xxvi. 41.

WHAT forbearance it shewed in our Saviour, when he was thus forsaken of his disciples in his last agony, not only not to reproach them with their want of sympathy, but to find an excuse for them. "The spirit, indeed, is willing, said he," but the weakness of the flesh has overpowered the willingness of the Spirit to endure watching, and ye are fallen asleep. It matters not: "behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand." How ill we should like it in any friend to fall asleep, or seem indifferent, when we were in any distress, especially in those from whom we might expect better things; but we must not be surprised to find even the best overcome sometimes, when we consider that the Apostles themselves were overcome with sleep at the most critical time that perhaps ever occurred in the world. It shews us, too, our own insufficiency for the great work of watching and prayer, and how entirely we are dependent not only for the will, but also for the power to perform. In short, the lesson of our own helplessness is the first step toward proficiency in the Christian life; and we cannot make any advances toward God, until we have discovered that without Christ we can do nothing. These same men who fell asleep at this time, were watchful enough afterward, and active enough when they had learned whence sprang their activity.



## MAY 13.

*Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself;—even thine altars, O Lord of Hosts.—PSALM lxxxiv. 3.*

THE sparrow and swallow are emblems, perhaps, of the outcasts and wanderers of society, who are yet received into the house of the Lord,—“For whosoever cometh unto him,” however contemptible in the eyes of men, “he will by no means cast out;” and his redeemed are often taken out from among the most despised of men. But there is a further meaning as to the providential care which God exercises over the most insignificant things in creation, providing house and habitation for them even in his temple; for Jesus Christ is indeed the grand upholder of the material as well as the spiritual world; and by him all things, however insignificant, subsist. “The sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest, even thy temple, O Lord of Hosts”—and that temple is Christ. “Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing, and yet not one of them is forgotten before God?” What an encouragement ought this to be to us, that he who does not forget a sparrow will not forget us; and that he who takes care even of the wandering swallow, and brings it back in safety to its accustomed habitation, will not leave his people to lose their way in this wilderness.

## MAY 14.

*Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.*—2 CORINTHIANS iii. 17.

WE can judge of the operations of the Spirit, in no way better than by their effects. Whatever has the effect of quieting our minds, and enabling us to cast ourselves, and all our concerns unreservedly upon the Lord, believing that he careth for us, is from the Lord. Whatever has the effect of disturbing us, or weakening that constant and quiet reliance on God, which is the privilege of every believer, though it come as an angel of light, and plead the authority of Scripture on its behalf, is from the Devil ; who is the great disquieter of our souls, and never succeeds so effectually, as when he acts the part of a friend, and comes to give us advice. But we may take it for granted that whatever makes us dissatisfied with our present condition, and leads to fret against God, is not from the Spirit of God, who is the author of peace, and not of confusion, as in all the churches. Sometimes Satan takes occasion to aggravate little things into great grievances, as if no one was ever so exercised as ourselves, when in fact we have nothing at all to complain of, or nothing but what is common to man,—to every man at some time or other. But where the Spirit of the Lord enters, his operations are accompanied with light and liberty ; He dispels these gloomy suggestions, and enables us to look upon our situation, as peculiarly favoured, and even to give thanks for those very things, at which we fretted before : or at all events to acquiesce in them for the present, as part of the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.

## MAY 15.

*Blessed is she that believed : for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.—LUKE i. 45.*

THIS is a blessing that belongs to every believer. There shall be a performance unto him or her of whatsoever things have been spoken of the Lord. This is for our encouragement. Whatsoever things we have asked of the Lord believing, we shall receive ; and more especially we are encouraged to hope for such *spiritual* benefits as we have sought of him in prayer, because in these we are less liable to deception, we are less liable to be misled by our wishes, and to mistake our own appetites perhaps for his promises. But even in temporal things we are also encouraged to hope in Him. He has promised us whatsoever things we have need of for our earthly pilgrimage : Nay he has promised us to “make all grace *abound* toward us, that we always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work.” But it behoves us to see that it is to good works that we seek to abound ; not to feed our own covetousness, nor to “lay up for ourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal,” but rather to lay up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come.

## MAY 16.

*Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about.—PSALM xlix. 5.*

ALL fear arises from legality; even those little misgivings which daily disturb us, and whereby our minds are possessed with a certain undefined fear of evil, or agitation of spirits about we know not what. I do not mean those strong sensations of fear, which befall us in seasons of exercise, but any manner of anxious fear to which we are subject even about outward things. The blood of Jesus Christ is the remedy for all those risings of the heart and palpitations which come from apprehension or affliction of any kind, and keep us in any manner of alarm. It is astonishing how much the body is affected by the mind, and how susceptible we are even in our outward health, of legal impressions. They disturb our peace, and disturb the natural and healthful functions of the body, even as peace of mind, and quietness within wonderfully promote our natural health. "Thus godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come," and a thorough persuasion of the forgiveness of sins not only produces peace of mind, but marvellously acts upon our natural constitution, and cures us of whatsoever infirmity we may be subject to, by its salutary effects upon the

## MAY 17.

*For his merciful kindness is great toward us : and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.—PSALM cxvii. 2.*

WHO can have more reason to say this than ourselves. “Mercy and goodness have followed us all the days of our lives,” and now that we are thus far advanced on our journey, we have still a prospect of increasing mercies. We have glad tidings of great joy; promises of all joy in believing; the gift of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven into our hearts, “to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the person of Jesus Christ.” There is born unto us a Prince and a Saviour, and he has promised to reign in us, and over us, and over all that belongs to us; “a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom, and the truth of the Lord Jesus endureth for ever.” He never did deceive, and he never will deceive any that put their trust in him. He will fulfil his promises of good toward us and ours;—He will make us monuments of His loving kindness and truth;—Yea, from this day will he bless us, for He has promised to be a Father to us, and to put his fear into our hearts, that we shall not depart from Him, but walk with him, in truth and righteousness, i. e. trusting in the divine unction which he has given us, and seeking alway His kingdom and righteousness in the first place, and other things only as additions thereto.

## MAY 18.

*The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.—*  
ACTS v. 32.

THERE is no gift, after the gift of Christ, to be compared with the gift of the Holy Ghost, sent down from Heaven ; to dwell in our hearts, “ and to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the person of Jesus Christ.” He is called the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus ; and it is He who both gives, and continues all spiritual life, so that if in any one act we have communion with God, it is solely and wholly by the grace of the Spirit of Christ. What a blessing therefore is it to have his promise, that he will send another comforter unto us, who shall abide with us for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, who shall guide us into all truth ; and what a still greater blessing is it, to experience the truth of this promise in our own particular cases, to feel within, the motions of the Spirit of Christ, not enthusiastically, nor by fits and starts, but sensibly and powerfully feeling as to the belief of the truth, and to the cordial acceptance of the doctrine of Christ. For he, says our Saviour. “ shall testify of me, for he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” And he does take of His righteousness, and of the riches of His grace, and displays them unto us, even all the love of the ever blessed Trinity. For it is added, “ All things that the Father hath, are mine.” Therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you. Lord, evermore grant us this living witness in our souls, even “ thy spirit bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

MAY 19.

*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*—1 Cor. ii. 10.

THIS is one of the offices of God the Holy Ghost,—the Revealer of secrets,—of things which were hidden from the foundation of the world, but are now made manifest for God's glory, and for our comfort. He reveals unto us the things that are freely bestowed upon us of God. He shews us his secret purposes of grace towards us, and stirs us up to ask such things as he means to bestow. He shews us things to come, what God means to perform upon the earth, both with reference to ourselves and to others. Thus he revealed the flood unto Noah, by which revelation he and seven others were saved. He revealed the destruction of Sodom to Abraham; and unto this day, he puts the people of God upon praying for such benefits as he means to bestow upon them, especially spiritual benefits: or for deliverance from such evils, as he forewarns them are coming upon the world. Let us seek therefore his direction in all things, for "if any man lack wisdom, he is to ask it of God, and it shall be given him, even the wisdom of God."

## MAY 20.

*Seek the Lord and his strength : seek his face evermore.—Pa. cv. 4.*

THIS is the principal business of life, and that which alone can benefit us in death ; to seek the Lord and his strength—to seek to be found in him,—“who of God was made unto us Righteousness ;”—in whom we have strength, for in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. They shall first be justified, and then being justified, they shall live by his strength, receive out of his fulness, and walk before him unto all well-pleasing. For the Lord delighteth in his people, in them that seek him according to his appointment, and there only he is to be found, in the person of Jesus Christ. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them.” And this is the word of reconciliation, which by the gospel is preached unto us. This is to seek the face of the Lord, and it is in this way that God shines upon us. The Lord the Spirit testifies of Christ unto our souls, and gives us to live a life of dependance on him. He gives us to trust all our concerns into his hands, so that we have not one care or fear, but we commit it unto him “in *all* things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, letting our requests be made known unto” him. What a blessed life is this, and how far above that life of careful dependance on their own exertions, or on each others help, which the world leads. “To set the Lord alway before us” is the perfection of Christian experience, to live as with God, in friendship with him, and assured of his favour.



## MAY 21.

*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.—ACTS xvii. 30.*

THERE is a season at which men are called upon to repent, and turn from the error of their ways; and if they do not turn, but persist in their disobedience, God will surely take vengeance on their inventions. Such a time is the present. The hand of God is gone forth in the earth, and he has called upon his people “to come out and be separate” from the idolatries of the earth, that they be not partakers of her plagues. There is surely much of the spirit of superstition abroad, and though God hath long winked at the times of their ignorance, yet, will he not always do so, “but will surely avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him.” So saith the Apostle,—“Though all things continue as they were since the fathers fell asleep, yet is not God slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, waiting, as he did, in the days of Noah, for our repentance and turning to him, that we may not be judged with the world.”

## MAY 22.

*They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.—JEREMIAH ii. 13.*

OUR Lord Jesus Christ has promised us that “the water which he giveth us, shall be in us a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life.” And it is added. “Now this he spake of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive.” Therefore, this living water is no other than the gift of the Spirit,—which Jesus Christ still bestows upon his people, and it becomes them not to hew out for themselves cisterns of human learning, or earthly wisdom, which can hold no water, but rather to ask of him, and he will give us this living water, which whosoever drinketh shall thirst no more,—that is, he shall find such perfect satisfaction in the communion of the Holy Ghost, that he shall waive other consolations, and having once obtained this gift, he shall never again be deprived of it. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance: and to whom he giveth, he giveth unto the end; not as the world giveth upon their good behaviour, but he gives them good behaviour also; and makes them by his Spirit, such as he would have them to be, *humble and happy*.

## MAY 23.

*If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him and he would have given thee living water.—JOHN iv. 10.*

THERE cannot be a stronger proof of the condescension of the Saviour to human ignorance and infirmities, than his whole conversation with the woman of Samaria ; for never were answers more beside the question, than all the answers of this woman ; her thoughts never seemed to mount beyond her natural wants, nor would she even understand, when our Lord endeavoured to draw her attention to higher considerations. Yet he still persisted to instruct her, and to bring her to desire a better inheritance, even a heavenly, and to look for better promises than those of a constant supply of water, even the promise of the Holy Ghost. This is the characteristic blessing of the gospel, even the gift of the Spirit, which they that believe on Christ receive, to enable them to live on him, and to look to him in all things. It is this gift which makes and which keeps our hearts happy in the Love of God. It is this which constitutes the blessedness of the saints in glory. They are one with God, and are partakers of the fullness of the Holy Ghost. They are one Spirit with the Lord, partakers of the divine nature ; *filled* with the Holy Ghost.

## MAY 24.

*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*  
—PSALM CXXVI. 6.

THE seed is the word of God, and he that goeth on his way depending on the promises of God, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring the performance of those promises with him. He shall find that God is true and faithful, true in the promise, and faithful in the performance; and though it be matter of grief and not of joy to him in the first instance, though against hope he believe in hope, and it be hard work to maintain his confidence at times, yet shall he doubtless triumph in the end: and find the blessedness of trusting. “For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that wait for him.” It has been well said, that waiting faith is strong faith; but we see by our Saviour’s repeated parables, that we ought to persevere, even after repeated disappointments, nor ever to doubt the gift of God. For though he bear long with us, yet will he surely think upon us at last, and grant us our heart’s desire. Lord, thou knowest our hearts, and thou knowest that we desire above all things, to live near unto thee, that thy kingdom of righteousness may be established in our hearts, and that thy will may be ours.

## MAY 25.

*That thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.—*

PSALM CXXVIII. 4.

To fear the Lord is only another way of expressing our belief in the truths of the Gospel; "For none can fear the Lord but such as believe in him, and none can believe but those to whom it is given." "No man cometh unto me," says our Lord, "except the Father draw him." On this fear of the Lord, follow all the blessings of the Gospel; for they that are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham. Whatever promises were made to him belong also to them. Such as, "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward," not only a protection from all evil, but a title to all good, and not only so, but by the same faith "an entrance is administered unto us abundantly," even now, "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." As many as are baptized, believing, into Christ, are made partakers of Christ. They are admitted into all the privileges and immunities of believers in Christ, such as being delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein they were held, having their sins forgiven, themselves justified, and all that belongs to them under a blessing. "For blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin." He is blessed in being exempt from the miseries of the world, from its cares and fears, its disappointments and anxieties, its follies and its vanities, in short, he is saved from numberless troubles that other men are subject to, and in the end he has the promise of everlasting salvation.

## MAY 26.

*Jesus said unto them,—If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.—*  
 MATTHEW xvii. 20.

THIS example seems selected to shew us that we are not to be deterred by the apparent difficulties of our requests, for that nothing shall be impossible to him that believeth. In was in the same Spirit that our Saviour cursed the fig-tree, not because it was unfruitful, more than many others, “for the time of figs had not yet come,” but to shew forth his power, and the divine efficacy of the prayer of faith, which is not restrained by any circumstances, but trusts without doubt or wavering, that what he hath promised he is able also to perform. Thus it was with Abraham, and thus it is with all his seed,—against hope believing in hope ; otherwise we should be robbed of many a promise, by thinking how far it was reasonable to expect the fulfilment of it ; what can be more above our natural comprehension, than the resurrection from the dead, and yet it is the foundation of all our faith. So that whatever we pray for, it generally goes backward before it comes forward ; and yet, “We ought always to pray, and not to faint,” because God hath promised that his ear shall be opened unto our prayers, and that, however extraordinary they may seem to carnal reason, yet he will justify them, and grant us the request of our lips.

## MAY 27.

*We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost,—*  
ACTS xix. 2.

WE see throughout the Scriptures a wonderful condescension to human infirmities, and human ignorance; such an High Priest became us indeed, who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on those that are out of the way; what should we think of any one now, that should tell us he had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost, we should think him a heathen indeed; and yet the Holy Ghost condescended to take possession of such hearts, and to abide with them; from which we learn that the sin against the Holy Ghost is not a sin of ignorance, but a wilful denying of his power and glory, and ascribing it to an evil influence. The Scripture is always consistent with itself, and never withholds mercy from the repentant sinner, though it abounds in the most awful threatenings to the wicked. Even a woman after living in adultery, after having been married five times, is not cast out, while a Pharisee that in self-righteousness had “fasted twice in the week, and paid tithes of all he possessed” was rejected. Lord, keep us humble and teachable, that however ignorant, we may learn of thee, the things that pertain unto our peace.

## MAY 28.

*Salt is good : but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned.—LUKE xiv. 34.*

It is a good thing to have the heart established with grace, not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. There is no substitute for grace. Grace alone can make a Christian, even the grace of the ever-blessed Spirit of Christ; and when we lose this, we are fit for nothing, "but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men." Still there is a promise even for such. "Ye have laid your body as the ground, to them that went over," saith the Lord, to his afflicted church of old, "but I will raise you up." And so it was with the Apostles, "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Thus it is a Christian may sometimes lose sight of the doctrines of grace, and of the blessedness of his election likewise, but he shall be recovered out of the snare of the fowler. "Though he were dead, yet shall he live," "The Lord will lift up the light of his countenance upon him," and he will be a perpetual light. The grace of the Holy Spirit shall become in him, "a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." It not only refreshes for the time, but it is a continual refreshing. The Lord not only revives us, but keeps us alive, and takes care that the salt shall no more lose its savour. We are indeed crucified to ourselves, but by the grace of God we are what we are, and he is able to make us a savour of life unto life, and as vessels of honour meet for his use.



## MAY 29.

*Lord, to whom shall we go?—JOHN vi. 68.*

WE are often inclined in our hearts to depart from the Lord, until we feel that we have no other refuge. For to whom can we go in all our distresses, but to the Lord. He is the helper of the helpless, and without his help they are helpless indeed. We see men in the highest situations become a prey to their own melancholy thoughts, and given up to the dominion of Satan. But it is not so with the people of God. "They are kept by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation." They are preserved in Christ Jesus, and called,—and a blessed calling it is—They are called to the knowledge of the truth, and enabled to believe on Jesus Christ unto everlasting life. The words that he speaks unto thee, they are Spirit and they are life. Hence they say, "Lord, to whom shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life." When things go contrary to us in this life, we ought to recollect, "That the things which are seen are but temporal, while the things that are not seen are eternal." We ought to recollect too, that if we forsake Christ as our friend in this life, we have no other to whom we can apply for sympathy or support. His advice is, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light. Yea, Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief,"—and unto thee, be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

## MAY 30.

*Remember Lot's wife.*—LUKE xvii. 32.

How much is implied in this admonition; and how striking are all the illustrations of Scripture: how much is conveyed in few words! Lot's wife looked back with an eye of longing on that wicked city which she had quitted, and became a pillar of salt. So Christians are charged, not only to come out of the world, but not to look back upon it with an eye of desire. "For the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The heart is the seat of all our backslidings: if therefore our hearts be right, we shall go on in the ways of the Lord; "but if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things." Nevertheless we have this confidence, "that he who hath begun a good work in us, will perfect it, and keep us by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation." "For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." There is no overcoming it otherwise. For while we fight with it on any other principle, than that of being saved from it, we shall have no power against it. It is the Spirit of Christ within us, that must overcome the spirit of the world, and he is no otherwise received but by faith in Christ Jesus. "Whosoever believed on Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God," and consequently to them gave He "power to overcome the world."

## MAY 31.

*And himself believed, and his whole house.*—JOHN iv. 53.

THERE cannot be a more suitable family picture than that which is here presented. To believe oneself is a great benefit, but it is a still greater to have believers about one, that our prayers be not hindered; but that contrariwise, we be assisted in that which is of most importance to us by those about us,—namely, in committing ourselves and all our concerns to Him, as unto a faithful Creator. Our servants then become fellow helpers of our joy, and contribute to our happiness, not only by the satisfaction of knowing that we are all seeking the same destination, but also by the contribution of their prayers on our behalf. It becomes us also to intercede for them; for if prayers and intercessions are to be made for others in general, much more for those about us; that they may be made partakers of the same benefits with ourselves, “and that with one heart and with one voice, we may glorify God; even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is evident that believers of old felt this sort of interest in their servants, by the recorded instances in the Scriptures: especially of him who had his household assembled to hear the words that were to be spoken of Peter, and it is added, that that word was accompanied with a divine blessing, “and as many as heard believed.”

## JUNE 1.

*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*—HEBREWS xiii. 13, 14.

IT tends greatly to quiet us in our anxieties about outward things, to remember their transitory nature, and our transient state;—for we are but in a state of passage; and it really matters little, if we could but think so, in what condition we travail through life, or what disappointments or gratifications we meet with in it. For the time is short, and it remaineth, that he that weepeth, be as though he wept not; and he that rejoiceth as though he rejoiced not. There is a state of Christian indifference to outward things, which it would become us much more to practice. for what can be more unbecoming than to see a Christian set upon the things of this life, even more than some that do not profess to hope for a better, and forgetting his high state and calling so much, as to condescend to the lowest means of advancement in this life, without reference to that better “City, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Lord Jesus, “lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us,” and enable us to live as becometh thy disciples, enable us to come forth unto thee, without the camp of this world’s concerns, bearing thy reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

## JUNE 2.

*Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*—JAMES i. 6.

THERE is no greater benefit than a faith in God's word, founded on a belief of His being perfectly reconciled to us in Jesus Christ, and of our being made partakers of His promises in Christ. For all the promises are made and confirmed in him; yea, all the promises are "yea and Amen in Christ Jesus." There is no apprehending any one promise but through him, though there is ample provision for the apprehension of all in him. It is by stating ourselves in Christ, that we may believe without presumption;—Nay we are guilty of greater presumption in hoping for any, the smallest benefit out of him, than we are in expecting the greatest blessings in and through him. He is our promise-performer, both as to conditions and actual fulfilment. He has all power in "heaven and on earth, and the residue of the Spirit is with him:—the spirit of love and of power, and of a sound mind." He has promised to give us the "oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." If there were no other blessing promised in the Bible beyond this, it were a sufficient security for our happiness in this life, as well as in that which is to come. Christ himself stands engaged for us. He is our bondsman, and he has executed all the conditions of the Lord on our behalf. It behoves us therefore to believe without doubt or wavering, and not to disparage his merits under pretence of doubting our own.



## JUNE 3.

*Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree,  
I saw thee.—JOHN i. 48.*

THERE is no greater comfort to the real Christian, than to know that the eye of Christ is always upon him;—that he sees us wherever we are, and whatsoever we do. Not in a vindictive way, but with an eye of complacency and delight. For the Lord delighteth over the righteous to do them good, and as his eye is always upon them, so his ear is open unto their prayers. No doubt Nathanael was under the fig tree for purposes of private communion with God, and Christ, as God, was present with him. He not only saw him but heard him, and sent Philip to him, with the glad tidings of salvation. How wonderfully and secretly is God sometimes providing an answer to our prayers; when and by such means as we least think of;—here was Christ on the point of manifesting himself to Nathanael, in answer to a prayer put up without any form of outward devotion, in the open air, and under a fig tree. It might be some such petition as this,—“Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.” The Lord knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, and answers accordingly;—not according to the letter, but the spirit of our petition. “They shall prosper that love thee.” So it was with Nathanael; his soul prospered. The Lord not only pronounced a blessing upon him, saying, “Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile:” but he gave him also a promise of further manifestations of his glory.

## JUNE 4.

*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.—PHILIPPIANS iv. 7.*

OUR happiness consists in having our minds carried above the cares and concerns of life, and this can only be by the power of the Holy Ghost, revealing Christ in us—revealing what he is to us, and enabling us to repose on him as our never-failing friend. Happiness is in the mind; and it is upon the mind that the Holy Spirit operates, enlightening and enlivening it, making it cheerful and contented. In the same way as the sun makes every thing look cheerful on which it shines, so also doth the Sun of Righteousness—He “shines into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.” This is the perfection of Christianity, and that which constitutes its excellence above all other religions. It is not a new system of doctrines; it is a source of enlivening influences—of cheerful anticipations. We are saved by hope, and “hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us,” and we are persuaded there is nothing too great or too good for that love to bestow upon us. How shall we be ashamed of our unbelief, when we come to heaven and look back upon the way in which we have been led. We are often ashamed of it now when we see the end of our exercises,—how much more when we receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

## JUNE 5.

*Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*—1 PETER iv. 19.

THERE is nothing more certain than that God must preserve both our bodies and souls, if we would have them in safety. “For except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” All our precautions, and provisions for health and for happiness are vain, without his blessing upon them. He is the Saviour of the body, as well as of the soul, and he must keep both body and soul unto life everlasting. For our bodies are the purchase of Christ’s blood, as well as our souls : and he has provided for the resurrection of our bodies, whereof he hath given us assurance by the resurrection of his own. “For a spirit” saith he, “hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” No ! Christ was as complete in his Resurrection, as he was in his Incarnation : and we are complete in him ; our health and happiness are all provided for in him, even as all our works are before-ordained to his glory. All the promises are in him yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us. Let us therefore in this confidence commit the keeping of our souls unto him, as unto a faithful Creator, and let us remember that he also is the Saviour of the body, engaged to keep that which we have committed to him unto the great day.



## JUNE 6.

*The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God,—PSALM lxxviii. 35.*

THERE are times when we are ready to faint, and to give all up, thinking that God has forgotten to be gracious, and that it is with us, even as with others, that all things go by accident, and that it is in vain to worship God, neither is there profit in serving the Almighty. Such thoughts will enter into the hearts of all men, and even the Apostle himself, it seems, was at times impatient under the cross, and besought the Lord that it might depart from him. But what said the answer of God, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness;” most gladly, therefore, says he, will I rather “glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, for when I am weak then am I strong.” When I am most sensible of my own weakness, and feel my own insufficiency, then have I most assurance of the power of the Spirit being put forth in me, “even of that Spirit of Jesus Christ, whereby he was raised from the dead,” from a state of utter helplessness and inactivity, to endless life and glory. God works entirely by contraries; it is in our weakness that his strength is made perfect,—by our sinfulness, that his righteousness is illustrated,—and in our folly that his wisdom is revealed. Let us learn to glory, therefore, in the things which concern our infirmities, that we may be made partakers of his power; and let us learn to say with the Psalmist, “It is he that giveth strength and power unto his people—Blessed be God.”

## JUNE 7.

*Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*—PSALM lxxvi. 12.

IT is the usual course of Providence to bestow his blessings through a preparation of suffering, not that such a preparation makes us in any wise worthier of them, but it teaches us to refer them to the right cause ; and it generally happens, that in whatever way we are afflicted, we are afterwards comforted in the same. Thus David complains of men riding over his head, that is, of his being subjected to the scoffs and contempt of men, before his exaltation to the throne of Israel ; and thus our Saviour himself was made perfect by suffering, and because he had “ humbled himself and became obedient unto death ; ” therefore it is said, “ God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” It ought to be a comfort to us, therefore, under the feeling of every cross, that the cross precedes the comfort, as certainly as clouds portend rain. They are the forerunners of God’s intentions of good toward us, and generally in that very particular in which we are made to suffer,—the *how* and the *when* must be left to him. It is enough for us to know the general course of his providence, and the infallible fulfilment of his word, “ that whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” We cannot have a better evidence of God’s care over us than the cross in some shape or other, “ by which the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world.”

## JUNE 8.

*All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*—ISAIAH xl. 6—8.

AND this is the word whereby the gospel is preached unto you. What a mercy it would be if we would live in a continual sense of the perishable nature of all sublunary things, if we were thoroughly possessed with a persuasion, that the time is short, and it remaineth that he that weepeth be as though he wept not, and he that rejoiceth, as though he rejoiced not. There is nothing lasting but the word of God: it endureth throughout all ages; and promises which were made many thousand years ago, are all in a course of fulfilment, “nor shall one jot or tittle pass from it till all be fulfilled.” When we observe this punctuality of fulfilment with regard to the church in general, ought it not to be an encouragement to us in our particular cases; ought we not to believe, that the same God, who is so careful to fulfil his word to his people at large, will not fail us in particular, but will surely think upon us, as concerning his word wherein he hath caused us to put our trust. There is no greater blessing than an assured reliance on the promises of God, both general and particular, which by the Gospel have been presented unto us.

JUNE 9.

*Considering thyself.*—GALATIANS vi. 1.

ONE use we ought to make of the afflictions of others, is to stir up our thankfulness, that we are not in the like calamity; for we are all equally undeserving, and can none of us claim exemption on the score of merit. He that rejoiceth in calamity shall not go unpunished, because it is clear that he is without a proper sense of his own undeservings; and is lifted up with the idea of his own immunity on some ground or other. Now there is no good ground of exemption from any affliction, but the word and promise of God; nor can we exercise faith on that promise, but by the power of the Holy Ghost, and it is his office to humble the proud sinner, and let him see nothing of good in himself, on which he can trust for protection, and so to lead him out to Jesus Christ, as his only refuge and strength. It often happens too, that what the world looks upon as calamities, are only blessings in disguise, or at least we know not the end of God's dispensations, to pronounce upon them, as evil or good. This keeps us humble, and unwilling to judge of others according to that word of our Lord, "Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged." He that condemns himself, is not so ready to condemn others. It is self-righteousness that makes us censorious.

## JUNE 10.

*What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits unto me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.*—PSALM cxvi. 12, 13.

THIS can be no other than coming to the full assurance of faith.—“having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water;”—and that conscience is evil, says Mr. Romaine, which refuses to build all its hopes of salvation on the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. There is no more acceptable worship unto God, than to come to him in the full assurance of acceptance with him, and in the full belief of all his promises, made and fulfilled to us in the person of Christ. This is taking the cup of salvation,—believing ourselves already saved, and calling upon the name of the Lord, nor can we ever call upon him effectually till we are thus persuaded, and can do so in his name, “in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” There is less presumption in believing boldly and unreservedly what is promised in Christ, than in even hoping for any the most inconsiderable benefit without him. Without him we can do nothing, we deserve nothing but wrath; but in him we are entitled to all good. “All the promises of God are yea and amen in him.” They are sealed up in him, already fulfilled to him, and assured to us;—He is the very performance itself. The gift of Christ was the grand fulfilment of all the promises which had been made unto the fathers; and if we looked more at what has been fulfilled, and less at our own petty expectations, we should fare the better. Our faith would gain strength in the contemplation of the past, for encountering the future.

## JUNE 11.

*Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.—PSALM cxliv. 15.*

IT is indeed a blessed thing to belong to the Lord, to have an understanding given us that we may know him in his blood and righteousness, and may rejoice in him. For they that know his name shall put their trust in him; “and this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.” This is the true God and eternal life, even to know Jesus Christ; “who is God over all, blessed for evermore,” and is also our surety for good. To have our hearts influenced by the love of God, and to live in the constant apprehension of God’s love to us, is all that we can desire. In this consists the life of faith; for faith worketh by love, and by love is faith made perfect. “We love him, because he first loved us;” and loving him that begat, we love them also that are begotten of him. Nothing short of this can make us happy:—namely, a thorough persuasion of the love of God, and with this we cannot but be happy; because whatever we need we receive of him. His ear is open unto our prayers, and it is only ask and receive. There is a continual intercourse between God and the soul; we discharge all our cares upon him, and he showers down his blessings upon us.



## JUNE 12.

*Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were.—*

2 PETER iii. 4.

It is one of the principal temptations of life, seeing all things go on in an apparently regular course, or, as some call it, according to the laws of nature. But still the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” We go on from day to day in the same course of indifference, and God in mercy suffers things to continue in the same state of unpunished guilt, to leave room for us to come to a proper sense of our misdoings, and to return unto him. He waits for us, and we may well be content to wait for him. “Hath God forgotten to be gracious,” said the Psalmist, “hath he shut up his loving kindness in displeasure?” No! He waits that he may be gracious unto us, and therefore will he wait that he may be exalted. He brings us to a sense of our slackness in duty by his delays, but especially the duty of watchfulness and prayer. “Though it tarry saith he, yet wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not tarry.” Whatever benefit or blessing we desire, however long it may be delayed, yet in the end it will surely come, and not tarry. And it will come soon enough; even as Christ himself saith, after a delay of nearly two thousand years;—“Behold, I come quickly.”

## JUNE 13.

*Whose praise is not of men, but of God—ROMANS ii. 29.*

How infinitely better is it to seek the praise of God, which whoever seeks sincerely is sure to find, than to be employed all our lives in courting public opinion, and not attaining to it after all. There is no such thing as believing, and indulging the ambition of popular favour at the same time. "How can ye believe," says our Saviour, "who seek honor one of another, and seek not that honour which cometh of God only." It is in his hands alone to set up and to pull down. Honour, as well as riches, is at his disposal, and we ought to be content with such a share of both as he is pleased to bestow upon us. "In whatsoever state I am," says the Apostle, "I have learned to be content, both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." And he had also learned to glorify God, both "by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report;" in all things he was instructed; and so was another who said, to be in more health or in more honour would be no addition to my happiness; I have enough of this world's good and ask for nothing but more thankfulness for what I have. Lord, let this be our spirit also, and keep us humble and thankful we beseech thee, and content with thy favour, which is better than life.



## JUNE 14.

*The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him ; and he will shew them his covenant.*—PSALM xxv. 14.

THE Lord reveals to us his secret will by his word, and by his providences. When we trust to him in our difficulties, he brings some scripture to our minds suitable to our case ; or he makes our way plain to us by his providences. But we must be careful not to trust too much to outward indications, nor yet to be discouraged by them ; for as in the one case we may be encouraged to do evil, so in the other we may be withheld from our purpose when it is right and good. The safest guide is the scripture, as revealed to us by the Spirit of God, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things and secret purposes of God ; and therefore he is the best director for us in all our difficulties. He shews us also the covenant of God, whereby he assures us of the love of God to our souls, and gives us such confidence in the care of God for us, that we do not doubt of his providence being exerted on our behalf ; God forbid, saith such an one, that I should doubt of thy power and providence, who have experienced so many instances of it, and have had so many assurances of thy love toward me, in Christ Jesus. Whatever perplexities I may meet with, let me never doubt that thou art still my Father, and Jesus my Saviour.

## JUNE 15.

*Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.—PSALM lxxxiv. 6.*

THE great difference between the Christian and the man of the world, is not so much in what befalls them, as in the different improvement they make of it. They are both subject to miseries, but the miseries of the believer are converted into mercies. He sees the Lord's hand in them, and experiences his deliverance out of them. Thus they become wells, out of which he draws encouragement towards God for the future. They are also made the means of bringing him more intimately acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel, for how can we learn the benefit of the cross, unless we are brought under it. Thus the pools are filled with water. We experience the blessed effects of the chastening hand of God upon us, and we are enabled to sing—"Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid." Therefore it is added, with joy "shall we draw water out of the wells of salvation." And to this agree the words of the Apostle, that "tribulation worketh experience, and experience hope." The experience of past deliverance worketh hope in time to come. It encourages our hearts and our hopes in God, and we go on our way rejoicing in hope of infinite mercies; "who hath delivered, and in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." And observe that all these deliverances are in virtue of his deliverance unto death, who was indeed "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

## JUNE 16.

*Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.*—PROVERBS xviii. 12.

THIS is true in the sight of God, though not perhaps in the sight of man. The proud prosper in the world, and the humble are trodden under foot. But not so with those whom God hath humbled. He will exalt them in due time. There is a time for every purpose under heaven—a time to pull down, and a time to build up, and he will in due time build the walls of Jerusalem, and gather together the outcasts of Sion. The Church may be low and in a low place, but he will infallibly fulfil his promise, that, “they who sow in tears, shall reap in joy, and he that goeth on his way now weeping and bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him.” Yea, Lord, we believe that we are nothing lessened in thy regard for suffering in the esteem of the world—“but on the contrary, that whom the world despiseth, thou delightest to honor, and whom the world honoreth thou wilt cast down.” So it was with Haman and Mordecai, and so it shall be with all those that fear the Lord. Those that honor him, he will honor, and such as despise him, shall be lightly esteemed. Lord, enable us to seek thy honor in the first place, believing that our’s shall follow.

## JUNE 17.

*Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God ?—JOHN xi. 40.*

THIS is still repeated to us. Only believe, and ye “ shall see the glory of God.” He doeth wonders for his people unto this day. He healeth the broken in heart, and giveth medicine to heal their sickness ; there is nothing too great or too good to expect from him. He giveth his Holy Spirit unto all those that ask him, and this gift is the source of all others—because it is by the Spirit that we are enabled to pray. He is the source of all light and cheerfulness, wherefore it is said, “ that light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart,” that is,—the Holy Spirit shall abide with them, and reveal unto them the subject matter of all gladness, which is “ Christ in us, the hope of glory.” This is to see the glory of God, to see Christ as our whole salvation, and to rejoice in him as such, and this is the peculiar gift of God the Holy Ghost. He is alone sufficient, but he is all-sufficient to teach us this lesson—to make up our happiness in Christ ; and having taught us he will keep us in the truth, so that we shall grow in the experience of their blessedness ; to whom the Lord will not impute sin. We shall grow in the enjoyment of all good things, and we shall find Christ a present help in every time of trouble.

## JUNE 18.

*The oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—ISAIAH lxi. 3.*

THIS is a blessed exchange, and it is a promised mercy to all the elect people of God. “Blessed are ye that mourn,” says our Saviour, “for ye shall be comforted.” And as surely as we mourn after a godly sort, so surely shall we be comforted also. For as our tribulations abound, so abound also our consolations. God apportions our joys to our sorrows, and sets the day of prosperity over against the day of adversity. He will not always be wrath, neither keepeth he his anger for ever. He will not always chide, for the spirit should fail before him, and the souls which he hath made. “He knoweth whereof we are made, he remembereth that we are but dust,” and he dealeth with us accordingly. “In all our afflictions he is afflicted, for the chastisement of our peace was upon him.” Lord, where are thy loving kindnesses of old, said one, but it was not long ere he had cause to praise, for he saith, “Thou hast put joy into my heart, more than when their corn, and their wine, and their oil increased.” Thus it is that God turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and “that the sun of righteousness ariseth with healing in his wings.” And to this effect was the prayer of the early disciples, “That thou wouldest grant that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus, by stretching forth thine hand to heal,” &c.

## JUNE 19.

*The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?—*  
 PSALM xviii. 1.

THERE is nothing can cast out the fear of other things, but the fear of God, that is a stedfast belief that he has all power in heaven and on earth, to do good or to do evil. He bringeth down to the grave, and he lifteth up. To him belong the issues of death. "The Lord killeth and the Lord maketh alive, blessed be the name of the Lord. Our Saviour says, "fear not them which kill the body," and these have no more that they can do, but I will tell you whom ye shall fear. Fear him who when he hath killed, can cast the soul into hell, yea, I say unto you, fear him." And surely, if we lived in the apprehension of the power and presence of God, we should not much regard the presence of man. Not that a slavish fear of God is that which can deliver us from the fear of the world. "But he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and this belief will keep him in a right apprehension of the relative importance of things. He will look upon men merely as the agents of God, and his instruments for good or for evil. It is not in man that walketh to direct his step, much less to do good or to do evil of himself. He is only a tool in the hand of Providence, which he turneth wheresoever he will. Therefore we may say, assuredly, "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear; the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid."

JUNE 20.

*He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ?—PSALM xciv. 9.*

WHEN we look at the wonderful contrivances of providence in the works of creation, they should lead us up to a contemplation of the divine perfections in those particulars, which are the subjects of them. Thus in the contrivance of the ear, what a wonderful mechanism is displayed, and how inimitable by human skill, even though we have the pattern before us. Who can pretend to make anything like it, or to supply the deficiency when it is lost. If, then, God be the author of this contrivance, shall we not suppose that he himself possesses the faculty itself in much greater perfection than we, who are only the subjects of it. If, being the creatures of his power, and the subjects (if I may so say) of his experiments : if *we* can hear, and see, and think, shall we not much rather suppose that God himself both sees, and hears, and understands whatever passes on earth. Yea, verily—he seeth us though we see him not. No man hath seen God at any time. He hears us too, though we perceive it not ; and he perfectly understands all our thoughts. There is something peculiarly comfortable in the idea, that he, who is our God and Saviour, knows perfectly all that belongs to us ; that his ear is open to our prayers, and that his eye is continually upon us. Lord, keep us evermore in this faith of thy providence, manifested in all thy works.



## JUNE 21.

*With his stripes we are healed.*—ISAIAH liii. 5.

ALL that *we* suffer is only the shadow of suffering compared with the sufferings of Christ, who suffered “the just for the unjust that he might bring us unto God.”—He suffered the penalty of sin—our sufferings are not, properly speaking, the personal consequence of sin, but rather are the fruits of fatherly love. “For whom God loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” The sufferings of believers are tokens of the favour of God: they are the way in which he administers his mercies,—but the sufferings of Christ were inflictions levied for, and in satisfaction of, *sin*: “He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:” and being made righteous in him, we have nothing to suffer in discharge of sin. That debt is already paid. “He has made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.” Now that which is made an end of is discharged to all intents and purposes so that it can never be again revived. It is necessary to keep this always in view in our exercises that they are not sent to expiate sin, nor have they even the power to convince of sin, that being the peculiar office of God the Holy Ghost. Nor is it less an infringement on the glory of that office, to expect from suffering the discovery of sin; than it is in violation of all we conceive of the sufferings of Christ, to attribute that to our own sufferings, which belongs only to his, namely—propitiation, in whole or in part, for our sins.



## JUNE 22.

*By stretching forth thine hand to heal ; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.—Acts iv. 30.*

THE name of Jesus is the fountain of health and of strength. It is by virtue of this name that we enjoy all blessings and benefits. He is the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul, and he still performs miracles of healing. It is with a view to our experiencing this divine power, that we are permitted to feel our own infirmities, that the glory of God may be made manifest, and that we learn to make use of Christ in all his covenant offices, as the physician of his people, for he alone can do us any good, and without his blessing, vain is the help of man ; but when Christ is called in, then a cure is certain, by whatever means it may be effected, or by no means at all. "He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," and he exercises a wonderful power over our minds in bringing us to depend upon him, and to believe in his word, more wonderful than any act of outward healing. This ought to be an encouragement to us to trust in him for the less, when we experience the greater, and to cast all our cares upon him who careth for us. For that he really does care for us, how can we doubt, when we observe the power which he puts forth in reducing our spirits to his obedience.

## JUNE 23.

*And have the keys of hell and of death.*—REVELATIONS i. 18.

THE Lord Jesus Christ is he that is spoken of in this place as having “the keys of hell,” that is, of having perfect controul over the devil and all his works ; so that he can do nothing but by divine permission. He is reserved in chains of darkness unto the great day, and cannot touch the people of God, but by the warrant of Christ. This appeared in the case of Job, but is still more evident since Christ himself has triumphed over death, and over him that had the power of death, which is the devil. We are apt to think sometimes that the devil and his agents, that is, all cunning people, could do as they please—but it is not so ! the kingdom of Christ ruleth over all. The Lord reigneth even in the midst of seeming confusion. He has the keys still, though they may seem to be wrested out of his hand. The government is upon his shoulders, and he has promised his people to be with them, even unto the end of the world ; so that no one shall be able to pluck them out of his hand,—neither shall the son of violence be able to do them harm : they are as safe in his keeping as if they were already in heaven. They are subject to no changes—all is ordered and sure, and that by an almighty Providence to protect them from all evil, and to bestow all good upon them.

## JUNE 24.

*In thy light shall we see light.*—PSALM XXXVI. 9.

THE view we take of things depends principally on the light in which we see them. It is not in the circumstances themselves that cheerfulness or the contrary lies, but in the light in which they appear to us. Wherefore even in Scripture it has been the constant prayer of God's people, that he would lift up the light of his countenance upon them, that is, would give them such a sense of his favour in all his dispensations that they should not doubt of his good-will towards them. This is the greatest benefit God the Holy Ghost can confer upon us, to shine into our hearts, to give us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ." And what is this glory? Why it is the forgiveness of sins; for when Moses besought the Lord that he might see his *glory*, he proclaimed himself unto him as the "Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and of great goodness, pardoning iniquity and transgression and sin, though he will by no means clear the guilty," that is, without a ransom. But Christ is our ransom, and God hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. Therefore we may look with confidence to God for all these promised blessings; namely, a sense of the pardon of sin, and an assurance of the imputation of righteousness,—according to that, "Behold, I bring near my righteousness, and my salvation it shall not tarry." And again, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness," that is, their want of righteousness—"and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

## JUNE 25.

*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.*—**HEBREWS vi. 19.**

IN all the storms of life we have all something or other on which we depend, and the hope of the Christian is cast “within the veil,” whither the forerunner, even Jesus is entered, made an high priest on our behalf, to plead our cause, and execute judgment for us. This is the ground of our confidence towards God, and it is a “hope which maketh not ashamed,” being the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. “It is sure and stedfast.” It cannot be moved, because it rests upon Christ the corner stone. We may meet with contempt or what we will, but our hope is stedfast, and God hath promised, that we shall never be ashamed. How much better therefore is it, to have hope in God, than to have our portion in this life, and with the children of this world, whose bellies he filleth with his hid treasure—not with the treasures of grace, but with abundance of all things, of which they see him not, nor acknowledge him as the author. Lord, enable us to “cast anchor within the veil,” and to “hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.” Even so, Lord Jesus.

## JUNE 26.

*These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name.—JOHN XX. 31.*

“THIS is life eternal,” said our Saviour, “that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Nor can there be a greater benefit conferred on us, than a clear knowledge of this truth, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, and that by him, whosoever believeth is justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. To know Christ, or rather to be known of him, is a greater benefit than any other that could possibly be bestowed upon us. It includes all others. Even the gift of the Spirit is a consequence of this knowledge. “To as many as believed on him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God ;” that is, he bestowed upon them his spirit, crying, Abba, Father, in their hearts, and enabling them by the self-same confidence with which he called upon God as his Father, to call upon him as their Father, according to that—“I ascend unto my Father and unto your Father, and to my God and to your God.” He becomes our God and Father, by being the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and this sense of adoption is conveyed to us by God the Holy Ghost, and is a consequence of our being made partakers of Christ. What benefit then can be compared to this benefit, or what people is like the people of the Lord, whom he hath consecrated to himself, called to be sons, and sent forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts. Well might the apostle say, “These things are written, that ye might know that ye have eternal life, and that knowing, ye might rejoice in it.”

## JUNE 27.

*The Lord's mercies are new every morning.*—LAMENTATIONS iii. 23.

SURELY we have occasion to say so—who experience day by day the goodness of God, leading us to repentance; that is, to a change of mind—to a dependence on God rather than men. For it is God alone that can really do us good, and he alone can do us harm. Well may we rather fear him therefore, who, when he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. But thanks be to him, He hath given us better hopes, even a hope that maketh not ashamed, having the “love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.” This day has been a day of mercies. To hear that any service you can do the saints is accepted of them—to see the hand of the Lord put forth on our behalf, and to believe ourselves befriended by him, these are mercies to be recorded by us. “The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath will he restrain.” No one can even rage without his permission, and he can quell that wrath when it has answered its end, to bring us to make our appeal unto him. Lord, evermore defend us with the saving strength of thy right hand, and deliver us.

## JUNE 28.

*Thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.*

—PSALM CXXVIII. 6.

IT is a great blessing to see the prosperity of those that come after us—to see our children become parents themselves, and blessed with a further posterity; but it is still greater to see the church of Christ flourishing, and “peace upon Israel,”—because we may be happy without children, even though they contribute much to our comfort; but we cannot be happy in the desolation of the church of which, as members, we must partake of its prosperity or adversity. Nevertheless we have a promise, “that in the days of famine we shall be satisfied, and that we shall not see when heat cometh, but our leaf shall be green, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” Nevertheless, it is of the first importance to us as Christians, to pray for the peace of Jerusalem; for in her peace we shall have peace. Yea, the Lord will give us his blessing, and cause the waters to flow, even the still waters of comfort, and that peace which he has promised shall be as the river, “and our righteousness as the waves of the sea.” “They shall prosper that love thee.” The Lord himself will prosper them. Did ever any seek the good of Jerusalem, and not prosper? Joseph was a prosperous man, and he sought the good of his people. Moses’ success came out of his zeal for the people of God. He chose rather to suffer affliction with them in the first instance, but God afterwards wrought a signal deliverance by his hands, and he whom they would not have for a judge over them, became both a judge and a deliverer.

## JUNE 29.

*The kingdom of God is within you.*—LUKE xvii. 21.

WE are very apt in the pomp of high-sounding names to overlook the simplicity of the subject before us, and in nothing more than in the coming and kingdom of Christ. For “the kingdom of God cometh not with observation,” but is the invisible work of God the Holy Ghost, possessing us with a sense of “joy and peace in believing,”—those great and precious promises, whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature, and of the divine happiness. He it is who dwells in us, and “shall abide with us for ever,” to “testify of Christ” and of his finished salvation, of the fulfilment of all the promises to Him as the head, and to us in him. For all are now made good, as the schoolmen say, ‘in potentia si non in re’—that is, he is now invested with all power to make them good, though they may not be yet made good to us. The residue of the Spirit is with him, to establish his kingdom in our hearts; and he hath said, “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” Ye shall receive such abundant communications of my Spirit, that my kingdom of righteousness shall be fully established within you, and ye shall be “filled with all joy and peace in believing.”



## JUNE 30.

*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.—PSALM ciii. 13.*

WE are apt to think sometimes that we are hardly dealt with, and yet cannot but confess that it is not with us as in times passed, that we have seen heavier afflictions, and yet that the Lord hath delivered us out of them all. Yea, though we may be permitted sometimes to feel our own misery, yet have we cause to bless God, that we do not feel it as in times past, though we may be fully persuaded of its existence in us, and that we are still subjects of the same misery, if it were permitted to break out. It does us good sometimes to remember the way we have been brought through the wormwood and the gall, that our souls may be humbled within us. It does us good verily, and serves also for our encouragement in future straits. The Lord hath delivered, and in him we trust that he will yet deliver us. We have committed all our concerns unto him, and he hath commanded us to take no thought for the morrow. He hath assured us that the hairs of our head are all numbered, and what more can we want to convince us that our smallest concerns are known to him, since even those very hairs which are incapable of sensation, and the most inconsiderable part of our animal frame are yet numbered in his sight, and not one of them shall fall to the ground but by his divine permission.

## JULY 1.

*The reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.—*

PSALM lxi. 9.

THE Lord Jesus Christ bore our reproaches, and we ought to go forth without the camp bearing his. He took the sting out of slander, by enduring the wrath of God in the malice of men. We only feel the semblance of the evil, and enjoy the real benefits—namely, the forgiveness of sins, and the assurance of righteousness, which comes to us in and by the reproaches of men. For our Saviour says, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and say all manner of evil against you,” for so did they against the prophets. And again, the Apostle assures us, that “when we suffer for righteousness’ sake, the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon us. On their part he is evil spoken of, but on our part he is glorified. If any man therefore suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed. And forasmuch as we cannot always know how far we suffer as Christians, God is graciously pleased to *impute* many things, which perhaps began in our own folly, to suffering for his sake, when the cross is taken up in submission to his will, and we accept the punishment of our iniquities at his hand. Thus it is that we receive the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.

## JULY 2.

*Anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*—MATT. vi. 17, 18.

FROM this we learn the duty of maintaining a cheerful appearance before men, even under pressing circumstances. When we are fasting inwardly under the feeling, perhaps of our infirmities, or the frowns of the world,—still we are to put the best appearance on the matter, to seem cheerful whatever we may feel, because it is for the glory of God, and not less a duty than any other. But it is a duty in which most Christians fail. Not only do they not look cheerful when they have any cause of oppression, but often for no reason at all, that they give way to despondency, and sometimes even *affect* to be cast down when they really are not. But they have their reward. They get the compassion of men perhaps, or perhaps not. From God they receive no commendation. He charges us to be of good cheer, or even when we feel otherwise, rather to *affect* their cheerfulness than despondency; to wash our face, and anoint our head, that we appear not unto men to fast or be despondent, but rather to speak out our sorrows to God, and to express our thankfulness before men. God looks at the soul. He regards not the outward appearance, and in every station, he that serveth him in sincerity of heart is accepted of him.

## JULY 3.

*Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.*—JER. xxxiii. 6.

THE cream of the blessing comes at the last—"the abundance of peace and of truth." To have our minds kept in peace through the revelation of the mystery of Christ is the principal blessing; and it is to be observed, that when we get any outward blessing in a providential way, it generally comes accompanied with some further revelation of the blessings of the gospel of the grace of God. We get some further insight into the doctrines of grace, and it is made the means of establishing our hearts in the love of God. For we love him, because he first loved us, and every fresh evidence of his love to us draws out our love to him. Thus it is that the restoration of bodily health is sometimes instrumental toward the re-establishment of our spiritual health. We taste the Lord's grace, and are led out in divine contemplations of his goodness. For it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." "The Lord allures us by his goodness, and though he bring us into the wilderness, it is only that he may speak comfortably unto us." What can exceed the blessedness of this view of sickness, and of all the little ailments that befall us. They are so many means appointed by our heavenly Father, for manifesting his love to us, and drawing out our love to him.

## JULY 4.

*Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*—EPHESIANS II. 10.

THERE cannot be a greater mistake than to think that predestination leads to licentiousness. It is the foundation of all good works, that is, of all that are really good; for many things may seem before men to be good, which are abomination in the sight of God; and again, many things are accounted good by God, which are not held in esteem among men; as real heart humility, and indeed the whole catalogue of Christian virtues, which if not absolutely despised, are yet not esteemed. These are all laid in predestination, that is, in the absolute purpose of God, to fashion us as vessels unto honour fitted for his use, for it were in vain to expect any such fruits from nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Nature may produce heathen virtues, but it can never bear Christian fruits. A great many of the mistakes about predestination arise out of a false estimation of good works; people mistaking for good works the mere efforts of nature, and again disparaging the real productions of grace. Another error arises from confounding the advocates of predestination with those that really love it; that is, that live on it in their hearts, and refer all the good they do or think to God, knowing that of him cometh both to will and to do. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." It is as much a creation, as the first creation was the one by nature without form, and void; having no tendency to good. Therefore God must work in us, and this he does not accidentally, but by a preconceived plan. He hath before ordained that we should walk in them. He hath appointed what, and how many works we shall perform; and man is immortal till his work is done.

## JULY 5.

*Let God be true, but every man a liar.*—ROMANS iii, 4.

IT behoves us under all circumstances to believe the truth of God. He is true in the promise, and faithful in the performance; and however contrary things may turn out to our expectations, we must still believe that they are according to his word. Thus did He that we might learn to lay down our own experience even, and disbelieve ourselves rather than distrust the word of God. The word says, for instance, that sin shall not have dominion over us. Yet we sometimes *feel* as if it had the mastery. Still we must stick to the word and to the testimony. God hath said, "Here we must plant our foot, and not move from this ground; for as soon as we begin to reason about it, as whether it is really so or not, we are lost." Our Saviour always opposed the devil, not by explaining the text which he brought, but by opposing another, and it is our wisdom to do the same. Many things may be capable of an explanation, which we cannot explain; many things may be perfectly clear which we do not understand. Therefore we ought to say, "Let God be true, and all," even myself a "liar."

## JULY 6.

*Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?—PSALM xlix. 5.*

THERE is no sin for which there is not a remedy provided in the sufferings of Christ, but the sin of rejecting the testimony of the Holy Ghost. "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God, and now being made nigh by the blood of his cross, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Wherefore then should we fear, or what have we to fear, since all our sins, the sins of our youth, and of our maturer age are forgiven. He hath freely forgiven us all trespasses, and not only so, but he has provided for us a perfect righteousness, wherein we may appear before God, and that without fear, for it is no less than the righteousness of God. By faith we become as righteous as the righteousness of God can make us, for we stand in exactly the same situation as Christ the righteous. We are of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. We are become one with him, and as such, are intended in all that he has done and suffered. As he therefore has no cause for fear, so neither have we. He is above and beyond all danger and disappointment—so are we. He is our surety for good; and though the vision tarry, yet we must wait for it, for it will surely come; it will not tarry. We shall as certainly reap all the benefits of his blood and righteousness as he has reaped them. We shall as certainly escape all the torments of hell, and be admitted to the glories of heaven.

## JULY 7.

*I have set the Lord always before me.*—PSALM xvi. 8.

THERE is no greater happiness than living in the continual service of the Lord's mercies and power, believing he is ever present with us, and rejoicing in all his gifts, whether of grace or providence. For it is of his grace that we are enabled to rejoice at all; and surely we ought to render unto him the first fruits of our enjoyment, by giving thanks unto his name. It becometh well the righteous to be thankful; and while they set the Lord always before them, they will never want for matters of thankfulness. When they set before them his righteousness, and obedience unto death, what he hath done, and is now doing for them, how can they be otherwise than thankful? Their hearts must overflow with gratitude, when they think of his goodness toward them,—what he endured for them, and what he puts up with in them. Any other friend would have forsaken them long ago. Who would put up with our turning our back upon them in seasons of prosperity, and returning to them again in adversity. Yet Christ does this and more. He receives us cordially, nor does he reproach us. He never casts up to us our ingratitude or backslidings, but he invites us to return unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. When we set all these things before us, surely we must, we ought to rejoice; and in order to increase that joy, we ought to be always setting them before us; for while we meditate, our hearts are kindled within us.



## JULY 8.

*And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.—*

ACTS xiii. 52.

THIS is the perfection of Christianity, so far as regards the experience of it. To be filled with that joy, which is the principal fruit of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. It is therefore called "joy in the Holy Ghost," and in another place, "joy in believing," which believing is a fruit of the Spirit, for no one can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. How much the apostle set upon this joy, is seen in those words, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and *again* I say, rejoice." It was enough to say it once, but he repeats the precept, "Again, I say, rejoice." "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is profitable," that is, it is not so troublesome to me, to repeat this precept, as it is profitable for you to obey it. And truly, what can be more profitable for us, than to know it is the wish of our Lord, that we should rejoice. Yea, he commands us to rejoice. He commands us to ask for joy, and he has promised that "our joy shall be full." We cannot doubt, therefore, that this is one of those requests which are according to his will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hears us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." It is a great consolation that our Lord has encouraged us to ask for the Holy Spirit, because whatever may be deficient in our personal experience, the gift of the Spirit supersedes all, and gives us assurance of being right in the truth. God grant that we may be "filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost."

## JULY 9.

*Lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil.—LUKE xi. 4.*

A LEGAL spirit is the worst enemy we have to contend with. It is Satan's strong hold, wherein he entrenches himself in our hearts, and nothing can cast him out, but the power of the spirit of Jesus Christ. This is indeed convincing us of judgment, " that the prince of this world hath been judged," and it is the last work of God, the Holy Ghost upon our souls. Well may we pray therefore, that we may not be led into temptation, but that if we are, and God should see fit that we should be tried with any particular exercise, we may yet be delivered from the evil or sting of temptation which is legality—legality constituting the strength of sin, and consequently the whole force of temptation consisting therein. It was this which gave force to all Job's sufferings, and to the evil suggestions of his friends ; and if we look back we shall find that all our own exercises have been aggravated, if not entirely made up of this ; that we did not believe God to be perfectly reconciled to us in Christ. The Devil himself is the spirit of bondage again to fear ; he is also called the spirit of fear, all fear springing from him. Wherefore it is said, that Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil, and more particularly to deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.

## JULY 10.

*Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.—*

PSALM CXXVIII. 2.

THERE is nothing for which we have more cause to be thankful, than for the manner of spending our time. To be enabled to pass it pleasantly, and without feeling it tedious, is indeed a great mercy, and it is surely a mercy that cometh of God. For we cannot but remember the time, not only in the days of our unregeneracy, but even since we have known the Lord, when time seemed much more tedious than it does now. To be enabled to fill it up with useful or with any employments, and to be inclined to do so, is a great benefit, and much to be acknowledged; when we see how many are straitened to get rid of their time, and therefore spend it in trifles. A sound mind in a sound body, is a great blessing. So also is a peaceful mind in the midst of personal occupation, for we cannot *enjoy* any occupation, nor indeed can we follow it with perseverance, unless the mind be at rest. A quiet conscience, that is, a conscience made quiet by the blood of Christ, is a wonderful promoter of bodily, as well as mental activity. We are ready for any occupation when the mind is at ease, but without that, every employment, nay, every amusement is tedious. The state of the mind appears in nothing more than in the *steadiness* of our pursuits. Blessed be God for this mercy. Let thy righteousness, O Lord, be our strength: then shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our lives.

## JULY 11.

*Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.*—ROMANS XV. 10.

THE love of God toward the children of men has always been a discriminating love. He first chose one nation out of all the nations of the earth to be his peculiar people, and he still has a peculiar people, whom he hath chosen to himself, to shew forth his praises in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. To such it ought to be matter of continual thankfulness, first that they were not born in those ages, or in those parts of the world which were not then called to rejoice with his people, and secondly, that being born in the present age and generation, they have been born again, and renewed after the image of him that created them in righteousness and true holiness. It is on this ground that they are invited to rejoice, not that they are of this or that particular nation, but that they become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus—made partakers of his righteousness and of his promises. For he was ordained to confirm the promises made before unto the fathers, to which sure promises we obtain admission by faith. For all the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Christ, and become ours by believing. Yea, an entrance is thus administered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and we become free of that company with which we are called upon to rejoice. “Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.” Yea, Lord, we look unto thee to fulfil thy word unto us, for thou hast said, “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” Be it unto us according to thy word.

## JULY 12.

*And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.—Acts iv. 33.*

It should appear from this that the resurrection was the principal subject of the Apostle's preaching, and no wonder, since it is that whereby God declares himself satisfied with the offering made for our sins, and that vicarious righteousness which Christ wrought out in our behalf. Wherefore it is said, "He was delivered for our offences, but raised again for our justification," and it is remarkable that immediately on the descent of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles began to give testimony to this important truth. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." This was the grand subject of their testimony. They had no new thing to tell after they had once delivered their message. All turned upon this, "that he had been made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Whereof God gave testimony in that he raised him from the dead. And being by the right hand of God exalted, he still sheds forth that which we now see and hear," and feel. Whatever good there is in any creature comes from him. It is a new creation in Christ Jesus. For we are created in him "unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." When it is said that with great power he gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection, it is added, "and great grace was upon them all." This therefore is the channel of all grace. It is by virtue of his resurrection that we are raised again to newness of life.

## JULY 13.

*Taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.—EPHESIANS vi. 16.*

By the fiery darts of the devil are here meant those wicked and sudden suggestions, which he injects into the minds of the people of God, against the truth and faithfulness of God to his word; or about our happy and comfortable estate as believers, and the way to distinguish such suggestions is to take notice, that whatever tends to disturb or to distress us in any way comes from the devil: the Spirit of God being the Comforter of his people, and all his operations tending to quiet and settle our minds. “The fruit of righteousness shall be peace, and the effects of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.” And again it is said, “that the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” Now we are directed to take the shield of faith, and there is no better remedy against every suggestion, than simply believing. It is not to be overcome by reasoning, but by believing some such Scripture as this—“Let God be true, and every man a liar;” that is, I will believe God’s truth in spite of the experience of all men, yea, even of my own. Though my house be not so with the Lord as I could wish, though I do not experience all things according to my expectation and my hope, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation. “His faithfulness and truth shall be my shield and buckler.”

## JULY 14.

*For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.*—PHILIPPIANS i. 29.

It is remarkable that suffering is here set forth as a privilege. "It is given." It is a part of the gift of God to his people, and in another place it is said, that we shall have an hundred fold in this present world with "persecutions." This seems a curious appendage to flesh and blood, as a part of our birth-right, but it is no inconsiderable part of the privilege of a believer to suffer for his name's sake. It entails a blessing. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely for my name's sake." One had better fast with Christ than feast with the world; and there is no time perhaps more distressing to a Christian, than when he is in friendship with the world, and feels at a distance from God. To see the hand of God in one's sufferings, turns even our sufferings into enjoyments, that is, makes them the means of communion with God, and of our establishment in the word of righteousness; and not to see his hand in our enjoyments, converts them into real sufferings; "for in the midst of mirth the heart is full of heaviness."



## JULY 15.

*Made himself of no reputation.*—PHILIPPIANS ii. 7.

WHAT a lesson is this upon the insignificance of all earthly distinctions, that he who was God, not only took upon himself the nature of man, but of man in his lowest estate. “He made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant,” teaching us that we also ought to be content in whatsoever state we are, and however little we may enjoy of the reputation of this world, since Christ himself was content to do without it. He who could have commanded it by a word, and might have assumed the kingdoms of this world and all the glory of them, yet appeared in the humble form of a servant, and submitted to the suffering of death. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Thus was it verified, that he which humbleth himself shall be exalted, and as surely as God brings us down to acknowledge him, so surely will he raise us up to praise him. “He casteth down to the ground, and he lifteth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.” We have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the word of the Lord. Oh, that we may exercise the same patience in all our adversities, and experience the same deliverance.



## JULY 16.

*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.—*

ROMANS IV. 8.

THE more we make up our happiness in that which varies not, the better it will be for us. As we cannot live without feeling sin, so we cannot live without continual matter of thankfulness in the forgiveness of sin, if this is the subject of our happiness. And that it ought to be there, cannot be a doubt, since it is that which most concerns us, both in time and eternity. In time, as it brings both peace and cheerfulness: "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," and again, "Son, be of good cheer," for the same reason;—in eternity, because the forgiveness of sins insures the imputation of righteousness, and consequently is the foundation of all blessedness, both for time and eternity. "He who was delivered for our offences, was also raised for our justification." His resurrection was the declarative act of our justification. It was a proclamation of peace and of good-will towards men. It declared that God was satisfied, and that we were discharged from all the guilt of sin, and from the want of righteousness; and the more we are enabled to dwell upon those subjects, and to make up our happiness in things external to us, the less we shall be subject to those variations which arise from outward circumstances, and operate on our own legal spirits. But this is a lesson which God the Holy Ghost can alone teach us, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh.

## JULY 17.

*Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.—DEUTER. viii. 3.*

IT is the grand distinction between the natural man and the Christian, that the one lives entirely by natural means, and trusts entirely to natural means, while the other lives by the word of God. “The just shall live by his faith.” His faith in fact is his means of livelihood both for body and soul. He is obliged to live in a constant dependence on the Lord, both for the bread which perisheth, and for that which endureth unto everlasting life; for though he may have other more visible means of living, yet occasions will arise to examine his dependence, and indeed God, in mercy to his soul, will create such occasions. “For as a father chasteneth his son, so the Lord chasteneth those that fear him.” And he will not suffer any such to get so much in love with the world, that they shall forget him, but will ever keep them in remembrance that it is by his providence they live, and that it is he alone who giveth power to get wealth. Whatever we get otherwise than with a sense of this blessing, is rather a curse than a benefit, and God will, sooner or later, bring us to feel that it can really do us no good. “But his blessing maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow therewith.” To him be all the praise of all the benefits bestowed upon us.

## JULY 18.

*The Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all they that wait for him.—ISAIAH XXX. 18.*

“THE Lord is a God of judgment” in various senses. He judgeth the wicked, and he also judgeth his own people, that they should not “be condemned with the world.” He is also a God of judgment, as knowing what is best for us, and ordering all things for our spiritual benefit. Are we too much set upon outward things? He straiteneth our means, that we should not be too much in love with the world. Are we so fond of the world in other respects? He hedgeth up our way, that we should not be carried away with the error of the wicked. In short, the Lord is a God of judgment both in providence and in grace. He “dealeth with us as with children, and blessed are all they that trust in him.” They are blessed in being “blessed with faithful Abraham.” For as many as are of faith are so blessed. They are partakers of the righteousness of God, and of the salvation of Jesus. He is blessed in himself, in his family, in his friends and connections. The Lord knoweth what is best for us, and he provides for us such connections as are best for us. It is better to trust in him for these, than to seek them for ourselves, because we may be mistaken in our choice, but God cannot be mistaken. In short, he is a God of judgment in this, as well as in all other particulars. He judgeth for us, and provides for us such things as he sees to be best. “Blessed be the Lord, and blessed be his holy name for ever and ever. Amen.”

## JULY 19.

*Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*  
ROMANS vii. 24, 25.

THERE is no doubt but that all believers feel their own misery at times, but it is their mercy to see a prospect of final deliverance. They feel that in them, that is, in their "flesh dwelleth no good thing," but still they know that in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead substantially, and that they are filled in him. In short, though they may be permitted at times to feel their own misery, yet have they cause to bless God that they do not feel it as in times past, knowing that it is yet all there, by what they do feel, and knowing too that they are everlastingly delivered from it in the person of Christ. Still with all our knowledge of ourselves, we are sometimes taken by surprise when we are left to feel what we are in ourselves, and more especially after we have been favoured with the gracious presence of the ever-blessed Spirit of Christ. This is hinted in the case of David, when he thought his mountain so strong that it could not be moved. But presently he says, "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." Nevertheless it is one of the principal benefits of having our "heart established with grace," and not with meats (or the doctrine of frames) which have not profited them that have been exercised therein, that we are less subject to those variations of feeling, because we set less upon them, and consequently there is not that 'needs be' for their being withdrawn, in order to convince us of our absolute safety in his hands at all times, and under all circumstances. To live above ourselves is our best attainment in the school of Christ.

JULY 20.

*I came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword.*—MATT. x. 34.

IT is extraordinary that when the Jews were seeking accusations against Jesus, they never brought this, that his professed object was disturbance, and that he came for the very purpose of sowing divisions in families, and setting the members of it one against another. It shews too, how little careful our Saviour was to guard his words, as it is called, so that he might not be misunderstood. On the contrary, he seems to have stated the matter in the broadest possible manner, and in that way which was most likely to give offence, for well might it have been objected. What sort of a religion is this, which would cause divisions in families, and make "a man's enemies those of his own household." But all such objections are lost when we consider the infinite superiority of that relationship which subsists between Christ and his church, above all other connections. "And he turned round on his disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother." If Christ so loved his disciples, they ought also to love one another, for he hath left us an example that we should follow his steps, and surely in nothing are we more bound to follow it, than in that preference which he gave to his own members above all earthly relations, and all earthly considerations whatever.



## JULY 21.

*And he calleth unto him, whom he would, and they came unto him.—*

MARK iii. 13.

WHAT an extraordinary instance of divine power was this, and how extraordinary would it seem at this time and in this our days, if any one were to call whoever he chose, and they should come unto him; and yet it was no less extraordinary in the days of old. But we are apt to overlook the miracle in many cases, under an idea that times were different, whereas the feelings and tempers were exactly the same, and it was only by knowing those feelings and tempers, in short by his omniscience, that Jesus could call whoever he would, and that they should come unto him. Let us learn hence how blessed a thing it is to receive that call which has the power of commanding obedience, even an effectual call, whereby we are not called unto wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, neither are we called to confusion, as some would have us believe, but unto peace as in all the churches. Lord, make thy call more effectual for this purpose, and be pleased to unite the hearts of thy people, that they may with one voice and with one heart glorify thee, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;” and grant unto thy servants such a measure of thy grace, that when thou callest, we may answer, and willingly submit ourselves to the directions of thy word and Spirit in all things.

## JULY 22.

*There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*—1 TIMOTHY ii. 5.

WE set up many mediators for ourselves, from a want of a right knowledge of the gospel plan of salvation, which is altogether different from the dispensation under the law. It is a "better covenant," established upon better promises, namely, unconditional ones, or of which the conditions have been all performed *for* us by another—Christ Jesus the Lord. "He is our Righteousness," and it is "through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father." When we seek access by any other obedience, or through any other mediation, we shall infallibly be disappointed. No repentance, or returning to God, can be permanent which is not founded on the Righteousness of Christ; it is by this that "we are renewed in the Spirit of our minds." It is by virtue of this righteousness that we have access at all times, and it is by this that we are kept alive to God and to the things of God. While we are watching over our own spirit, our lamp goes out, "but in his light we shall see light." "I am the light of the world," says our Saviour, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

## JULY 23.

*Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*—1 TIMOTHY iv. 5, 6.

THIS passage contains a remarkable proof that praise and prayer live and die together. There is nothing it seems to be refused; but what has been sanctified by prayer, will always prove a matter of thanksgiving. We are sometimes guilty of over-valuing the outward benefits of God, and sometimes of despising; but we ought to do neither. Since every thing is good that comes to us in a way of believing, being sanctified by the word of God and by prayer. Thus an outward benefit becomes an inward blessing, and gives us assurance of the love and providence of God, of his tender care over us, and his concern for his people. This enables us in any future exercise the better to cast our cares upon him, believing that he careth for us. His care for us being the foundation for our unconcern about ourselves, otherwise it would be unreasonable and absurd. But when we have the word of God assuring us that he takes care for us, and are enabled in the faith of this word to pray unto him, we may then expect to be furnished with continual matter of thanksgiving in the fulfilment of *his* word, and of *our* petitions.



## JULY 24.

*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

—1 TIMOTHY V. 8.

IT seems to be the duty of every believer to take care that his family do not become chargeable to others, and to that end to use his utmost endeavour for their proper advancement in life. We may surely then look for a blessing upon our exertions on their behalf, and hope for the countenance of God in anything we undertake for their benefit. Our conduct, of course, must be guided by our circumstances, and relative situation in life. When we have none to provide for but ourselves, we can do as we like, but when we have children to succeed us, we seem called upon to do that which will be most for their advantage, to keep alive such benefits at least as we have inherited ourselves from those that went before us. If such be the case, we are justified, no doubt, in looking for a blessing on our exertions to this end, and shall experience the presence of God wherever we go, and whatever we thus undertake for his name.

## JULY 25.

*For thou Lord wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.—PSALM V. 12.*

RIGHTEOUSNESS is the foundation of all blessedness. "The Lord will bless the righteous," and as a consequence of this, "with favour will he compass him as with a shield," that is, he will make his goodness to pass so clearly before him, and to appear in all things around him, that it shall be as a buckler unto him. He shall make use of it as an argument against all the suggestions of Satan, and all the misgivings of his own heart of unbelief, to defend him against all insinuations from whatever quarter to the prejudice of his peace. The value of such a buckler is particularly felt in seasons of temptation, when the heart is apt to entertain jealousies of the love of God; but when we can record the many acts of his goodness, and recount the numberless instances of his favour, it tends much to silence such doubts, and to establish our hearts in the peace of God. It is the greatest benefit we can enjoy in experience, to live in a continual apprehension of the favour of God—to realize his friendship, and to feel persuaded of his love. For then we can truly say, "If God be for us, who can be against us."

## JULY 26.

*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.—*

PSALM cxii. 4.

IT is a great comfort to believers that let their case be whatever it may, they still have a promise. If they be walking in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto them. They are commanded to trust in the Lord, and to stay upon their God. It matters not what our perplexities may be, the Lord is able to deliver us from them all, from all our doubts and disquietudes, and to dispel the mist of uncertainty which hangs over us. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit, O Lord." Teach me thy way, and lead me in a right way because of, or by means of thy commandments—those commandments of faith and love which he has enjoined on his people. "For this is his commandment, that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment." "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." Yea, we shall experience present and everlasting salvation. Let thy presence go along with us, and give us peace. Yea, fulfil in us all the good pleasure of thy goodness and the work of faith with power.

## JULY 27.

*The generation of the upright shall be blessed.—PSALM cxii. 2.*

How many are the promises made to the believing people of God about their offspring, and how amply have they been fulfilled in the experience of the saints since the foundation of the world. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were a succession of believers, and all blessed in their generation. The Lord was pleased to reveal unto them all in turn his purposes of grace in Christ Jesus, and to make known the riches of his mercy toward them. They all looked forward to the coming of the Lord—of him who should bruise the serpent's head. "Abraham saw the day of the Lord, and was glad." So did Jacob when he worshipped, "leaning upon his staff," which staff was Christ. For we do not suppose it had no further meaning than an ordinary staff, since nothing could be more natural, or less worthy of being recorded, than that an old man should lean upon a staff. But this staff on which Jacob leaned, was Christ the staff of life, the supporter of the faithful, whose everlasting arms are underneath his people at all times, and on all occasions, not only when they are sensible of it, but even when they are yet in their blood. "He is their shield, and their exceeding great reward," and in due time he gives them the comfort of knowing this. He gives them to believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God. "Thus an entrance is administered unto them into the kingdom," and thus "the generation of the faithful is blessed."

## JULY 28.

*He that believeth, shall not make haste.*—ISAIAH xxviii. 16.

It is one characteristic of true faith, not to be in a hurry. To wait patiently for the Lord. How many evils have arisen even to the true people of God from impatience. It was from impatience that the Psalmist, or whoever wrote that psalm on the prosperity of the wicked, formed such a wrong estimate of human life, and of the dealings of God with his people. In another place he adds, "I said in my haste, all men are liars," even those who have borne testimony of the faithfulness of God; he concluded in his moments of impatience, that they had done it falsely. It was through haste that Saul offered sacrifice before the coming of Samuel, and consequently had the kingdom wrested from him. And what shall we say more, but that men very often make haste to do evil. But the believer on the contrary is taught to tarry the Lord's leisure. "Be strong, and he shall establish your heart, all ye that put your trust in the Lord." In returning and in rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. Once lose sight of your confidence, and you will have no more strength to go on your way rejoicing. For the joy of the Lord is our strength, and it is by waiting and not by struggling, by trusting and not by contriving, that we must be saved.

## JULY 29.

*There the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.—*  
PSALM CXXXIII. 3.

THE Lord hath promised his people life, and this life is in his Son. It is by virtue of our union with Christ, that all our spirituality arises. We have nothing in ourselves but sin and death. "For to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. For the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be ;" but the spiritual mind is the mind of Christ. It is the same mind which was in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are actuated by the same spirit which dwelt in him while upon earth, and still dwells in him in all fulness now in heaven. The residue of the Spirit is with him. "Our life is hid with God in him, and when Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." "The Lord is my light, and my salvation," saith the Psalmist, that is, the Lord Christ. He is the light of life, and whosoever followeth him, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. They shall be enlightened to behold Christ as their righteousness, and in beholding him, they shall be changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. What a blessed condition then are they in. The Lord himself is their glory.

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## JULY 30.

*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.—MATTHEW xi. 29.*

PRIDE is the foundation of all our disquiet, especially legal pride. Our legality is the cause of all our misery. It is only by renouncing this, and becoming really humble in spirit, that we can find rest unto our souls. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of joy above thy fellows." This is spoken of Christ, and is indeed that true humility which we must learn of him, "that we may find rest unto our souls." We must cleave unto his righteousness, and abhor all that is opposed to it—especially we must have no dependence on our own doings or sufferings, and then shall we find true joy of spirit. "The oil that is poured upon the head shall descend unto the beard, and thence unto the skirts of his clothing." The humblest members of Christ, yea, the least in the kingdom of heaven, shall in this way become partakers of his joy. The joy of the Lord shall be their strength, and so shall they find that his yoke is easy, and his burthen light. What cross can be heavy which we see Christ himself imposing upon us, not in anger, but in love, to crucify our worldly affections, and to make us more fit for communion with him.

## JULY 31.

*Which was kept secret since the world began.*—ROMANS xvi. 25.

WE are apt to overlook the benefits we enjoy in the age in which we have been born, when the doctrines of the gospel are neither kept secret, nor yet set forth in types and shadows, but clearly preached unto us, even the everlasting efficacy of the blood of Christ, to cleanse us from all sin, and the infinite value of his righteousness to justify us from all things. For there is nothing required by the law, even in the way of penalty or precept, that has not been fully satisfied; and now this is fully revealed unto us for the obedience of faith. And we do believe, blessed be God, and do experience joy and peace in believing. "Blessed are your eyes," said our Saviour, "for they see, and your ears, for they hear things which many kings and righteous men have desired to hear and see, and have not seen them." And again, he says, "Among them that are born of woman, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist, and yet I say unto you, that he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he." From which I conclude, that even one that has very imperfect notions of the gospel in its fulness and absolute freeness at this day, is yet more favoured than the most highly favoured of the Old Testament saints. For they saw through a glass darkly indeed, but we behold the glory of God more visibly in the person of Christ, and in the fulfilment of that which they only saw in promise, and afar off.



## AUGUST 1.

*Who daily loadeth us with benefits.*—PSALM lxxviii. 19.

How few days are there in which we have not some mercy to record—some benefit bestowed—or some deliverance wrought; all which require acknowledgment; and are renewed mercies in the acknowledgment. For there is nothing for which we have more reason to be thankful than for a thankful spirit; inasmuch as thankfulness continually furnishes fresh matter for praise; and when we are once made willing to look at our mercies, we never want mercies to look at; but they are fresh every morning, and are the growth of every day. It is astonishing how much matter of thankfulness we may find often in little things, and as life is made up of little things, there is no doubt that we lose much of the sweetness of life itself by overlooking little mercies. There is nothing in which we ought to be more economical than in taking account of our mercies, not to omit any, even the least, since we are less than the least, nor is there any thing in which we ought to be more careful of waste, to gather up the fragments, as it were of our benefits, that nothing be lost. He who thus administers his affairs, and takes notice of *all* his mercies, will soon grow rich in remembrances, and in hope toward God.

## AUGUST 2.

*He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.*—LUKE XV. 16.

IN seasons of desertion and alienation from God, we are all apt enough to take up with the pleasures of the world; and would fain find satisfaction in them, until we experience their emptiness, and the unwillingness of the world to minister to our real happiness. Nothing indeed is further from their intention: they only consider each other, as they contribute to their own interest or amusement, and nothing perhaps gives us a truer idea of the world than the loneliness of adversity. No sooner does adversity overtake any than the world forsakes such an one immediately, and no one is willing to minister unto him. But not so with God—He is ever ready to receive us—Yea, though we have wasted his grace by riotous living, and despised his goodness and long-suffering, leading us to repentance, yet no sooner do we turn unto him, than he returns unto us, and receives us with open arms—putting on us the robe of righteousness, and making for us a “feast of fat things.” O that we could be persuaded never to forsake him, who never forsakes us, and when we do forsake him, to return to him at once, “who is ever more ready to hear than we are to ask,” and to receive us than we are to return. When once we are persuaded by his Spirit to turn unto him with full purpose of heart, the grand difficulty is over, and what follows is only the joy of reconciliation between God and the soul.

## AUGUST 3.

*And he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle.—*

JOHN ix. 6.

COULD anything be apparently less adapted to the end of restoring sight than such a prescription! Nevertheless it answered the purpose. Now as the virtue could certainly not be in the clay, it must have been in the spittle of which it was compounded, and thus it is that the divine nature of Christ sanctified the human, and that whatever he did became doubly efficacious by virtue thereof. His blood and his righteousness by reason of this union receive infinite value, and become all-sufficient for the salvation of sinners, otherwise they would be of no value at all, for the end for which they were designed, any more than the mere clay would have been to open the eyes of the blind. By denying the divinity of Christ, men rob his incarnation of all its efficacy, and his work of that which alone gives it value. It is the duty of every creature to worship the Creator, and had Christ been only a creature, his righteousness and sufferings could have barely sufficed for himself. But when we consider that he who obeyed and suffered was God himself, we then see a good ground for hope in his righteousness, as of more value to justify, than the whole body of sin is to condemn. Yea, we see more virtue in the hem of his garment, than in a whole robe of the most perfect righteousness a creature is capable of fulfilling.

## AUGUST 4.

*And strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin.—Exodus xii. 22.*

WHATEVER we do, we must do under cover of the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether we take possession of a house, or quit it, we must still do all to the glory of God, and in the faith of that one offering, which perfecteth for ever all them that are sanctified thereby. It was by this faith that our father Abraham was justified, and we must walk in the steps of the same faith, if we would desire to walk with God as Abraham did. The difference betwixt a believer and an infidel, consists not so much in the things done, as in the spirit in which they are done. The one does all in the name of Christ, trusting for acceptance to his most precious blood and righteousness; the other looks at the things done, as worthy or unworthy in itself, and considers not anything beyond the merit or demerit of the action itself. It is thus that the one is accepted in his works, and the other whatever he does, is always in a state of open rebellion against God and his righteousness.

## AUGUST 5.

*The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and for evermore.—PSALM CXXI. 8.*

THE Lord never withdraws his care over us. He careth for us, whether we take care of ourselves or no, yet his care is ever the same. He compasseth us about with songs of deliverance. Yea, when we are least sensible of his mercies, they often prevail most, and he exercises more particular care over us, when we are out of the way. "For verily I say unto you," saith our Saviour, "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance." Thus it is that he keepeth our going out in a spiritual sense, making even our outgoings and backslidings to praise him, but in a literal sense also, his providence watcheth over us, and preserves us from all danger, directing our paths, and bringing us home in safety, yea, suffering no evil to befall us: "For he keepeth all our bones, so that not one of them is broken. The Lord is thy keeper. He is thy defence upon thy right hand, so that the sun shall not smite by day, neither the moon by night." And though most of these promises are applicable to Christ in the first instance, yet are they applicable to his seed after him. "For the word which was put into his mouth, was not to depart out of his mouth, nor out of the mouth of his seed, from thenceforth and for ever." Be it unto us according to that word.

## AUGUST 6.

*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.—LUKE xvi. 31.*

THERE can be no stronger evidence than that contained in the Scriptures of truth, and if we once lose sight of the value of the word in fixing our faith, and confirming our hope in God, there is no other ground of confidence toward him. Wherefore our Saviour prays,—“ Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth,” and it is by the truth of the word, that an entrance is administered unto us abundantly into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Can anything be more surprising than our own indifference to the word, even after we have trusted that the Lord is gracious thereby. Still we look upon it more as a history of others, than as a book written for our own particular use, and addressed fervently to us. “ For to us is the word of this salvation sent, and it is profitable for reproof, for doctrine, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Lord, grant us a right apprehension of the value of thy word, and while others are looking for a sign from heaven, let us be content with thy testimony in our hearts, that we are the children of God. Rather when disturbed with the signs of thy wrath, let us consult these oracles of truth, which tell us that “ Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”

## AUGUST 7.

*Praise ye the Lord—PSALM cxvi. 19.*

THIS ought to be our principal employment, namely, praising the Lord; and he surely is worthy of all the praise of all his creatures, and more especially his new creatures, those whom he has created anew in Christ Jesus. For when we have no other subject of thankfulness, we have always this of our new creation in Christ, of our being made one with him, united by faith to him, and made partakers of his fulness and glory. All then are matters of thankfulness, and we cannot praise him for these, our hearts are not in tune to praise him for any thing else, for our state in Christ is the foundation of all our other benefits, and that by which they are secured to us. Yea, the breath we draw is a fruit of his love, seeing that by him "we live, and move, and have our being." When sin entered into the world, and death by sin, the sentence might have been executed at once, and all the human race consigned to immediate destruction. But no sooner was the sentence pronounced, than the promise was given, "that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." And now it is especial subject of thankfulness, that Satan is judged, that the prince of this world has been cast out, and that though he may be permitted to plague us at times, and has power to torment, he has no power to condemn; but that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us.

## AUGUST 8.

*The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—2 CORINTHIANS iv. 18.*

NOTWITHSTANDING this marked difference between spiritual and temporal benefits, how fast do our hearts run out after any thing that promises an earthly advantage, and how slack are we in embracing any thing that tends to our spiritual benefit. Nothing shews the carnality of our hearts more than this, for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also, and where our heart is, there we may believe that our treasure is. However God, who is rich in mercy, has made a rich provision for our salvation in this particular. Christ has overcome the world for us, and he will overcome it in us. His victory is the pledge of ours. We fight under the banners of a conqueror, and against a vanquished foe. The prince of this world is already judged. He is already cast out. The victory is already obtained, and we have only to gather up the spoils, which consist in peace of conscience and assurance of final victory. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Because I have conquered, I will make you more than conquerors also. My victory is imputed to you, and shall be made perfect in you. You shall feel the power of my cross, crucifying the world in you through the power of the Spirit. He shall testify of me, and of my victory. He shall convince you not only of sin and of righteousness, but of judgment, that the prince of this world *hath* been judged; and he shall abide with you to keep you in the constant belief of this victory.



## AUGUST 9.

*The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law*  
1 CORINTHIANS XV. 56.

THERE is nothing more certain than that our legality is the cause of all our misery, that we have no uncomfortable feeling, nor any sorrow of which has not sin for its foundation, and guilt in some shape or other. If we lived constantly believing, we should be constantly cheerful, because we should know and feel that we had nothing to apprehend from any quarter. "Ye could have no power against us," said our Lord, "excepting it were given you of God above." And this he said, when all the powers of earth and hell seemed confederate against him, and Satan had every thing their own way. Now, if we could realize, as we ought, the pardon of sin, we should see the powers of hell disarmed, and Satan like lightning falling from heaven. He shall come to judge the world of judgment, because the prince of this world has been judged ; and being judged, he has no more power to hurt or condemn. What an inexpressible source of cheerfulness is this, that Satan is cast down, the accuser of the brethren, and that the whole of his accusations has been destroyed together. Now there is now no more condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Lord, help us thus to walk, that we may reap the full benefit of living thus always believ-

## AUGUST 10.

*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth ; because thou didst it.—*

PSALM xxxix. 9.

THERE is nothing tends more to quiet us under any dispensation, however grievous to the flesh, than to see the hand of the Lord in it. It is enough for the believer that the Lord hath done it, because he is sure that there is a good end in it, and that his object is to do him good at the latter end. We have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy ; but it is astonishing how much rebellion there is in us, and that though we have heard of the patience of Job times out of number, yet no sooner does any exercise befall us, than our faith and patience fail us forthwith, and we are apt to think it might be so with Job, but it will not be so with us. Nevertheless the Lord is faithful, though we believe not. He abideth true to his word of succour under temptation, and of improvement after it. “It worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.” And certainly if we did but consider the large harvest of blessings that follows in the train of affliction, we should look upon it as the best friend we have in the world. Other friends fail us when we need them most, but Christ is ever nearest to us when we are forsaken by others. Well may we be dumb therefore and not open our mouths, when we perceive the hand of the Lord.

## AUGUST 11.

*Be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.—ROMANS xii. 2.*

IF I mistake not, “the renewing of our minds” here mentioned, is the same word as that which is rendered, “repentance” in other places, and means a complete change of views, as to the importance of spiritual and eternal things. It is necessary that our minds should be renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created us, even Christ Jesus, before we can be properly said to be transformed. For we are by nature set upon outward things, and look upon the things of time and sense as our best inheritance. And it is the Holy Ghost only that can fetch the worldly bias out of us, by “taking of the things which are Jesus Christ’s, and revealing them unto us.” He shows us their importance, and enables us to embrace them as infinitely superior to any thing that this world can offer ; and by this means he gives them a preference in our choice. We embrace them, not by constraint, or by virtue of any commandment, but willingly and cheerfully, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.

## AUGUST 12.

*It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garment.*—PSALM CXXXIII. 2.

WHAT a blessed thing is the union of believers. “Being made one with Christ, they become one with each other.” This is that true union, which belongs to the church—the union of the Spirit. “They that are joined to the Lord are one spirit.” They have the mind of Christ. They love those whom Christ loves, and they love as he loves, not for the inherent qualities of the person himself, but because he bears the image of Christ. “For my holy name’s sake, do I this,” saith the Lord, and so saith the believer. Wherever he sees the image and superscription of Christ, he acknowledges brotherhood at once, and receives the person who bears it, at once into his affections, even to the lowest and the least. It ran “down to the skirts of his clothing.” “Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of these, *the least* of my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Lord, open our hearts and our hands toward thy people. Make us zealous in thy cause, anxious to promote thy glory. Let our affections be no more set upon things on earth, but on things in heaven. Let us learn to live unto thee who hast died for us, that when we come to die, it may be to live together with thee.

## AUGUST 13.

*Give us this day our daily bread—MATT. vi. 11.*

EVERY day brings its exercises, and every day brings its consolations. For as our sufferings in Christ abound, so abound also our consolations. The Lord knoweth what we have need of, what portion of his grace for each day's necessities. He knows what we have to meet with, the dangers we have to encounter, and the temptations we have to endure. And for all these he provides the needful grace, to enable us to endure them as we ought, and to reap benefit from them. I often think we should not be so ready to quarrel with the cross as we are, if we could only anticipate the benefits that are to be derived from it. It humbles us, and brings us to a sense of what we deserve better than any denunciations however severe, and it also shews us what we are saved from. To bless God for all that befalls us, is the best improvement of all that we meet with, inasmuch as we can meet with nothing but by his appointment. Even the curses of the wicked are of his sending, that is, he permits them for the trial of our faith and patience. Therefore David said of Shimei, "It may be the Lord hath sent him, and will turn his cursing into a blessing." How does it quiet us under all his dispensations to see his hand in them, and to learn to kiss the rod, knowing who sent it, and wherefore it is sent—this being all the fruit—to take away our sin.

## AUGUST 14.


*If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say ; If it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us ; Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.—PSALM CXXIV. 1—3.*

It is our greatest safeguard and happiness to have the Lord on our side, and to know that he befriends us. For then may we say, " Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world." He is not only our friend, but he is Almighty to give force to his friendship. " He is the head over all things unto his church," and though we be a backsliding and rebellious people, yet the Lord is engaged on our behalf, and he has promised to uphold us with " the word of his power." " Yea, the Lord of hosts is for us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." Thus it is that he sustains us from day to day. " Underneath are the everlasting arms." He cannot faint—we cannot be overcome. For he hath conquered the world for us, and will conquer it in us. " Sin shall not have dominion over us, because we are not under the law, but under grace ;" and grace is almighty to take out of us " the heart of stone, and to give an heart of flesh." And when the Lord has humbled us, he will also humble our enemies. He will undertake for us. He will plead our cause for us, when we cease to plead it for ourselves. Yea, the Lord himself, even Jehovah, will be our God, our shield and exceeding great reward.

## AUGUST 15.

*Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God:—1 Cor. i. 24.*

THERE is nothing more contrary to nature, than the whole dispensation of the gospel. It sets aside all our notions of personal merit, human sufficiency, and carnal wisdom, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. It teaches us, that whatever we want, we must seek it in him. He is the wisdom and the power of God to all that believe. They see a wisdom in this foolishness of preaching, far beyond the wisdom of the world, which is after all, but solemn trifling. But this wisdom is substantial, first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. The doctrine of the cross also communicates power. We feel ourselves invigorated thereby. It yields a substantial relief to all our sufferings, and teaches us to look upon them as light compared with that weight of glory, which shall be revealed in us. For even Christ himself despised the shame for the joy that was set before him, and we must learn to despise it in the same way. We must learn to realize that joy, which remaineth for the people of God.



## AUGUST 16.

*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.—*

1 JOHN i. 7.

How much do we daily need this cleansing, that is, so far as our own conscience is concerned. “For by one offering, Christ hath perfected for ever all them that are sanctified.” But when we feel the stirrings of corruption, and how much rather we would trust to Mammon than to God, how does it humble us in the dust, and shew us the corruption of our own hearts. “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness,” but we would rather believe anything than God. Yea, we would rather trust to that bread which perisheth, than to that which endureth unto everlasting life. However, Christ has provided this remedy for all our evil, that his blood cleanseth from all, and being acquitted of the guilt of sin, we are delivered from the power of it. “For sin shall not have dominion over us, being not under the law, but under grace.” This it is which subdues sin, even the precious seed of the everlasting gospel sown in our hearts, and overpowering our corruptions by the power of the Spirit of Christ Jesus dwelling in us, and abiding with us for ever. “To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”



## AUGUST 17.

*And he said to the woman, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.*—LUKE vii. 50.

THE forgiveness of sins is the greatest of all benefits, and that from which all others flow. As many as touched him were made whole of whatsoever disease they had, and thus by virtue of the forgiveness of sins. For this was the virtue that went out of him. All misery and all disease comes from sin. There is not an ache or a pain that was not first introduced by sin. Adam was as free from pain, as he was from sin. All evil was introduced at the fall. "For by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." And not only death, but all things tending to death, and every evil less than death; or, as Milton says, 'brought death into the world, and all our woe.' These the forgiveness of sins removes in a body. There is no evil of body or mind, that may not be removed by faith in the death of Christ. Only believe, "all things are possible to him that believeth." "Go in peace," said our Saviour, to one who had hitherto been weighed down with a sense of her sins, and he still says, "Go in peace" to such as believe on his name. His word is still accompanied with power, and the sinner is enabled to believe it with as much assurance as if it had been spoken to him by Christ himself.

## AUGUST 18.

*His commandments are not grievous.*—1 JOHN v. 3.

THERE is nothing required of us in Scripture, but what is really for our comfort. It is for our comfort “to take up our cross and follow Christ; for his yoke is easy, and his burthen is light.” It is made easy by the sense of peace accompanying it, and light by the removal of that load of sin and guilt which weighs down the sinner, and makes life feel a burthen to him. But Christ relieves him of this load, and when he takes upon him the cross of Christ, Christ takes off him the weight of sin, so that he gains infinitely by the exchange. “Lord, make us willing in the day of thy power.” “Let us not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, seeing it is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe.” It were indeed a blessed thing to consider nothing but the will of God in anything that we do—to seek to please him without reference to pleasing other people, or even ourselves. So should we enjoy more real happiness, than by all the self-seeking and carnal conformity in the world. At the same time we must ever remember, that the way to please God in the first place, is “to believe in him whom he hath sent, and in whom he hath declared himself well-pleased.” This is better than the whole burnt-offerings of our own devising, or any sacrifices we can make.

## AUGUST 19.

*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*—JAMES i. 27.

I HAVE often wondered at the connection, or rather apparent want of connection betwixt these two offices of the Christian life. But I do not so much wonder now, for I am persuaded that we lose all inclination for visiting "the fatherless and widow," by too much commerce with the world, as we lose our taste for worldly society by a more frequent intercourse with the wants and distresses of the poor. The pleasure of relieving those wants is far beyond the false pleasures of society. Yet it is of mere grace that we are enabled to feel this pleasure. Both the inclination and the opportunity of doing good is from him. Of him cometh "both to will and to do." And so of the world—we cannot deliver ourselves from this present evil world. It is God that must deliver us. The Scripture says so in as many words, "Who hath delivered us from this present evil world." Yea, who hath delivered, and will deliver. For we want renewed deliverance. We are ever in our hearts turning back again into Egypt. Therefore we want continual renewing in the spirit of our minds that we may not only come out, but *keep out* of the world.

## AUGUST 20.

*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.—*

ROMANS iv. 8.

BLESSED indeed—for with the forgiveness of sin we receive also a remedy against all the evils of life, and against the fear of death. It is remarkable, how much may be drawn from the scripture by a true spiritual apprehension of its meaning. Who would have thought of founding on this simple scripture the doctrine of imputed righteousness, unless he had been led by the Spirit. “But the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God.” He knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit in writing, and he gives us that mind in reading, so that we see things as God sees them, and understand his secret meaning: otherwise we might read the Scriptures for ever, and meditate upon them world without end, and yet should be no wiser. God the Holy Ghost is the only commentator of any value upon his own word, and can alone lead us into the right meaning of it. “He shall teach you all things,” says our Saviour, “and shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” And it is astonishing how he suggests Scripture to our minds in confirmation of any particular truth, which never occurred to us perhaps before, nor to any one else. He makes every word profitable to some one or other at some particular time, so that “man does not live by bread alone,” or the obvious means, “but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

## AUGUST 21.

*And when he had said this, he fell asleep.—Acts vii. 60.*

WHAT a blessed picture of the tranquillity of a believer's death is here presented to us! Although overwhelmed with stones, and no doubt covered with bruises, yet we find Stephen falling asleep as if in the arms of his beloved. Who does not desire to die the death of the righteous? If such be death, then death itself is truly desirable. If amidst pain, and ignominy, and reproach, the believer triumphs over death, how much more in the peaceable enjoyment of all things, that should make death comfortable. And yet we see those who have all things to alleviate their sufferings feel them much more than others, who have no manner of outward consolation. And why? but because as their afflictions abound, their consolations abound also. The presence of Christ overpowers all other considerations, and gives them a "peace which passeth all understanding," to counterbalance their want of outward comfort. While others wanting that peace, can find no rest any where, but are in the condition of him "who went about seeking rest and finding none." I know not whether the death of a believer, or an unbeliever, displays most the value of that blood and righteousness, which is the only secure foundation for living or dying.

## AUGUST 22.

*Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body.—EPHESIANS V. 23.*

BOTH body and soul are united to Christ by an inseparable union, so that he is engaged to preserve both, and does uphold the life of the one as well as of the other. For as it is he, who maintaineth our souls in life, so it is he who keepeth our bodies in health, and if at any time we are afflicted in health, it is he alone who can restore us, for he giveth medicine to heal our sickness. What that medicine is, is told us by the Apostle, who says that “the prayer of faith shall save the sick,” and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. But how little is this medicine now in use. Among all the remedies that have been proposed who ever thought of proposing this? or what credit would he have been likely to meet with, had any one proposed it? Still is it that medicine on which the efficacy of all others depends. For in vain do we give any other, if this be wanting. Except the Lord save the body, their labour is but vain that would save it, and “except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” No sanatory regulations; no precautions will avail. Let us therefore return unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. Yea, “let us turn unto him with weeping, and fasting, and prayer. Let us confess our sins unto the Lord, that the city may be saved, and we ourselves may be saved in the day of his wrath.”

## AUGUST 23.

*The Lord loveth the righteous.—PSALM cxlvi. 8.*

How much is contained in these few words! The character of the persons beloved—the righteous—not those who are righteous in themselves, for in this sense there is none righteous, no, not one; but those who are made righteous through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. And how is it then imputed? By faith, “for to him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Then what follows on this righteousness—The Son of God—“The Lord loveth the righteous.” And how is this love manifested. “God so loved the world,” that is, the elect part of it, “that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Son of God is also manifested in his care of his people, especially as relates to their spiritual welfare. “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” When he sees them doing amiss, or following after things which make not for their peace, he takes the rod; “for folly is bound up in the heart of a child,” but the rod of correction shall drive it out. Again, when the rod has produced its effects, the peaceable fruits of righteousness, he removes the cross, whatever it be, and thus again proves his fatherly love; for the Spirit would fail before him, and the souls which he has made.

## AUGUST 24.

*God is with thee in all that thou doest.*—GENESIS xxi. 22.

THERE was a visible blessing on Abraham, so that it was noticed by all that saw him ; and how came it upon him ? The Apostle informs us that it was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith ;—not because Abraham was better than other people, or more diligent in any respect, but because he looked to Christ, and lived the life which he lived in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God, believing in his resurrection and sufferings, and rejoicing therein, as it is written—“ Abraham desired to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.” How much more cause have we then to rejoice, who have seen the fulfilment of that which Abraham only looked forward to. “ Blessed are our eyes for they see, and our ears for they hear things which many prophets and righteous men desired to see and hear, and saw them not,” but in the prospect of faith, and as it were on the distant horizon. What ground of confidence also have we toward God, in that Christ has now suffered, and has risen from the dead, and now sits at the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him. So that he has all power to bless his people, yea in all things that they put their hands unto.



## AUGUST 25.

*In returning and rest shall ye be saved ; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.—ISAIAH XXX. 15.*

THIS Scripture seems to express the real nature of the Christian Sabbath—that rest of soul which results from a quiet confidence in God ; a confidence sustained by the belief of Christ's righteousness, and an assurance that God is perfectly reconciled to us in him. We need nothing more to make us perfectly happy and contented with our lot ; to set us at rest in our own minds, and to enable us to rejoice in the Lord. We seek out many inventions, but after all the way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from the snares of death ; that is, our life is hid with Christ in God, and in him only are we to seek it. All other attempts end only in disappointment and death. Nothing can give us rest, short of the blood of Christ, and there can be no true cause of rejoicing but in the righteousness of Christ. “ Thou hast made known to me the way of life, thou wilt also make us glad with the light of thy countenance.” It is only in the person of Christ that we can see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

## AUGUST 26.

*If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?—HEBREWS xii. 7.*

THIS is a very encouraging account of afflicting dispensations. They do not proceed from anger, but from love. We never love our own children better than when we correct them for their good. Sometimes indeed we may do it for our own pleasure, but we are sensible of the difference. And God never does it but for our profit. "For as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." He deals with them as with children. He deals with them graciously, apportioning their exercises to the strength of their corruptions. When was it that we ever met with any thing afflictive, that we did not feel our previous need of it, either in dissatisfaction with our present state, the want of thankfulness, or some such provocation on our part. Nor is it as a punishment that such things come upon us, but to bring us unto the enjoyment of those mercies which we did not enjoy before. We ought neither to overrate nor to undervalue our present benefits, neither to despise nor to have our hearts too much set upon them. But unthankfulness is quite as common as over estimation; and there is no surer symptom of unthankfulness than wishing for a change, or for things otherwise than they are. Contentment and acquiescence seem to be our principal lessons in this life, both as to outward things and as to our spiritual state. And when we get uneasy and restless, we cannot wonder that we should feel the rod of correction.

## AUGUST 27.

*The Lord is there.*—EZEKIEL. xlviii. 35.

IT is the Lord's presence which constitutes the glory of any place. "My presence," says he, "shall go along with thee, and I will give thee rest." This makes the sabbath the presence of the Lord giving rest, and enabling us to realize the truths of the gospel and to rejoice therein. The Lord is then there, and it is the Lord's day. Without this it is a mere legal ordinance, and profiteth not. It is the presence and power of the Lord that constitutes the real blessings of the day, and distinguishes it from every other day. "Then stood he in the midst of them, and saith, Peace be unto you." The Old and the New Testament agree in this, that the presence of Christ can alone give peace. "There is no peace to the wicked," and without Christ we are all wicked, for there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Therefore our Saviour says, "My peace I give unto you." It is his peculiarly, not only by purchase of his blood, but because he also can bestow it. The peace of God is to keep our hearts through Christ Jesus. The residue of the Spirit is with him, to bestow it on whomsoever he pleases, and he has promised his peace to his own people, to write his name upon them, so that it shall be said, "The Lord is there."

## AUGUST 28.

*Thou, O Lord, knowest me.*—JEREMIAH xii. 3.

It is a comfort in all the exercises of life, and even in the hour of death, that known unto God are all his works. He knoweth what is going on within us. "He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust." Yea, the Lord has a perfect insight into all our thoughts, and he also knoweth his own purposes of grace toward us. It is in this way that he puts such petitions into our mouths, as he himself means to grant, for the Lord hath never said unto the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye my face in vain." No sooner does he enable us to cry unto him, than he heareth us, and answereth according to the abundance of his mercy. We may well say then to our souls, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me;" hope still in God, who is the strength of my countenance and my God." Yea, let us continually hope in him, since he knoweth all our desires, and has promised to supply all our needs. It is not necessary for us to inform God of our wants. He knoweth all things, and he knoweth what things we have need of, before we ask him. It is merely as an expression of our dependance, that we let our requests be made known unto him, and for the satisfaction of our own minds, that we may learn the correspondence betwixt our prayers and his purposes.

## AUGUST 29.

*Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils : for wherein is he to be accounted of ?—ISAIAH ii. 22.*

WE have many occasions to learn this lesson, but it is a comfortable one. For God never lets us feel our want of anything, but to supply its place by his own presence. Thus when we are disappointed for the present of any outward help, he strengthens us mightily by his Spirit in the inner man, and gives us to feel that his power is above and beyond all creature dependences. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. The means in themselves can profit nothing, but as they are made effectual by Him ; but when we begin to look at them as an *end*, they cease to be means any longer, and become an idolatrous dependence. There is nothing like going to God at once with all our complaints, and appealing to him from all our discouragements. He then makes darkness to be light before us, and crooked things straight. He clears up all our difficulties, and when he has shown us our own idolatrous hearts, he gives us the real enjoyment of such things as we desire, and enables us to make a right improvement of them. All things are ours in Christ, to use to his glory, and to enjoy to our own comforts.

## AUGUST 30.

*But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.—*  
2 CORINTHIANS i. 9.

THE resurrection is a miracle continually repeated in the experience of a Christian. In all that he does, he receives the sentence of death in himself. He is brought to experience it a matter of despair, so far as depends on himself, and thus he is brought to trust in God which raiseth the dead. For as a corn of wheat is not quickened except it die, so no spiritual enterprise succeeds without a sense of our own insufficiency in the first instance. Thus it is that we go on continually in the experience of our weakness and God's power, till we come to a perfect man, to the measure of the fulness of the stature of Christ. For the height of experience consists in a total self-renunciation, and the more perfect this is, the nearer are we to Christian perfection. For the perfection of a Christian does not consist in absolute perfection, but in an acknowledgment, a feeling acknowledgment of his utter imperfection. "For when we are weak, then are we strong, and when we die to ourselves, we become alive unto God."

## AUGUST 31.

*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*—JOHN xiii. 35.

THE communion of saints is one of the great privileges of the Christian. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member rejoice, all the other members are glad with it. It gives us a fellow feeling for and with our suffering brethren, and it teaches us to love one another indeed. The union betwixt Christ and his Church, and the mutual love of the one to the other, is set forth in Scripture many times by the relation of husband and wife. Nor can there be a greater honour put on the married state than such a comparison. It behoves us, therefore, to see that it be not only a comparison, but a real likeness, and that we live together as heirs of the grace of life. For we have many benefits in common, but none greater than a common interest in the “things that pertain to everlasting life.” This ought to be the principal bond of affection betwixt married people, and this is the only bond that will withstand the corruptions of the world and the casualty of life. “By this shall all men know that we are his disciples” indeed.

## SEPTEMBER 1.

*Together with my dead body shall they arise.—ISAIAH XXVI. 19.*

THE resurrection of Christ is the grand declaration act of our justification. It is that whereby God hath declared himself satisfied with the suretyship of Christ for his people—well-pleased for his righteousness' sake. We need nothing more to assure us of God's acceptance of his propitiation on our behalf. He was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection from the dead. The Holy Spirit hereby conveyed to us his perfect acquiescence in the work of redemption, by raising him from the dead. Hence it is that our hopes and fears are renewed by the contemplation of this great event. "We are quickened again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." This is what we celebrate, or ought to celebrate, on every Sabbath day,—the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and our being renewed thereby to a lively hope. It is a day of hope, and we cannot employ it better than by seeking that rest which belongeth unto the people of God; a rest from care and fear, and by holding fast the rejoicing of hope unto the end—by resisting all despondency, and endeavouring to shew ourselves a cheerful and happy people, that seed which the Lord hath blessed.



## SEPTEMBER 2.

*Much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.—*  
2 CORINTHIANS iii. 9.

THERE was a glory in the law of Moses, which was the ministration of condemnation. It consisted in doing or suffering. "Do this and live," and do it not and die. It set forth the perfections of the divine nature, and the purity of the divine law. Nevertheless it was a glory which was to be done away. But the glory of Christ is an everlasting glory. "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endureth throughout all ages." And why? but because "a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of his kingdom." It is the "ministration of righteousness," and it brings peace to the soul: wherefore he is called "the Prince of Peace," as well as "King of Righteousness," because he establishes his peace in our consciences by revealing his righteousness to our hearts. Can there be conceived a more blessed condition than that of a person "justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses," and made perfectly righteous. "Such honour have all his saints." Yea, though he know it not, yet it is theirs. They may not apprehend it in its perfection and freeness; yet, nevertheless, they are not the less justified.

## SEPTEMBER 3.

*And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.—ISAIAH XXX. 21.*

THE Lord holds communion with his people at this day, as he did of old. He shows them his will, and not only so, but he also enables them to embrace it. He points out the way in which they should go, and he gives them an hearty inclination to adopt his suggestions. Only, Lord Jesus, be thou present, and all shall be well. "Let thy presence go along with us, and give us peace;" a mind at rest, and quietly waiting for thy salvation. How gracious are all the intimations of divine Providence. He satisfies the mind by his own internal influences, and shows us his will by his word. "Hereby know we that we are of God, by the Spirit which he hath given us." The divine illuminations of the ever-blessed Spirit of God attend his people, and convince them out of his word, that their way is according to his will. And when we know that we are walking according to the will of God, it makes us marvellously indifferent as to the approbation of men, though indeed we do not despise it, when it comes in a way of believing and obeying the will of God. "All the creatures of God are good, and nothing to be refused" in a way of thanksgiving.

## SEPTEMBER 4.

*If God be for us, who can be against us ?—ROMANS viii. 31.*

WHAT a blessed tranquillity does it bring upon the mind to be persuaded that God is on our side. Not that we wish for vengeance on our enemies, but that we are assured of protection for ourselves. The Lord is our keeper, he is our defence upon our right hand. "He is our shield, and our exceeding great reward." He not only protects us, but he bestows himself upon us—according to that prayer of the Apostle, "that we may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;" and be "filled with all the fulness of God." This is an addition to the promise of protection, or rather our safety is a consequence of this. We are united to Christ—made one with him—and are therefore safe under the shadow of his wings. The acts of true faith toward the Lord, are exceeding simple, and they are very simple in their effects. Faith consists much in a quiet reliance on the Lord as our friend, and the effect is "quietness and assurance for ever." But we are sometimes not content with this simple reliance, and its corresponding effects, but want we know not what—some elation of spirit, or manifestation of sensible power. Now can there be any more sensible manifestation in our favour than being left in a state of quiet reliance on the Lord, when we are so prone to distrust and disquietude in ourselves. It is as much an evidence of power, as when our Lord said, "Peace, be still," to the waves, "and they immediately obeyed his voice." Lord, grant us evermore this quiet persuasion of thy friendship towards us.

## SEPTEMBER 5.

*Ye are the temple of the living God:—2 CORINTHIANS VI. 16.*

WE ought always to hold in mind our high privileges. We “are the temple of the living God.” He dwells in us. Let us not therefore defile this temple, by undue association with unbelievers, but let us ever remember that the temple of God is holy, and ought to be kept holy. Christ himself was “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” So ought his people to be, first in him, and then in themselves. Our separation is perfect in him, imperfect in ourselves. We cannot be as we would, but Christ is all that to God, which *we* ought to be. He is our high priest, and through his perfect separation, our imperfect sacrifices of devotion to God become acceptable. Otherwise they would be odious, as tainted with sin and self-seeking. Who can say that his motives are perfect in any thing that he does, that he has not some regard to his pleasure or interest. But Christ pleased not himself. His motives were perfect. He did all from a pure regard to the will of God. “I come to do thy will, O God,” and by *his* doing it *we* find acceptance.

## SEPTEMBER 6.

*Casting all your care upon him ; for he careth for you.—*

1 PETER v. 7.

THERE is nothing in which we so much deceive ourselves, as in attempting to struggle against small cares. We are equally unable to meet them, whether they be small or great. But when any great concern presses upon us, we feel our inability, and appeal from it, whereas we are apt to struggle with small cares, and are sure to be overcome by them. It is for this reason that sharp exercises often tend to our cheerfulness, because they drive us to God, but we are apt to fret and be uneasy under little vexations, without endeavouring to get rid of them, by consulting him at once. There is nothing more true in divinity, than that God lets us feel our own weakness in little things, and shows us his power in great things. People are not so apt to be broken down by sharp afflictions, at least Christians are not, as to be overtaken with a fretful and complaining temper generally, which is equally at variance with the Scripture rule of anointing our head, and washing our faces, that we appear not unto men to fast. We little think how much men judge of us by our cheerfulness or otherwise, and how much it concerns the glory of God, that we should appear cheerful before men.

## SEPTEMBER 7.

*They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.—*

Hosea iii. 5.

IT is the goodness of God that leadeth us to repentance. There is no true repentance or change of mind, without some apprehension of the goodness of God. For his goodness is his glory. When he promised Moses to make his glory pass before him, he proclaimed himself as “the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in *goodness* and truth.” And it is said in another place, “There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared;” so that the mercy of God is the ground of his fear; from which we may gather, that it is not a slavish fear which is here meant, but a fear bordering on love, that sort of fear which a child has to disoblige an affectionate parent. Thus it is promised that we shall fear the Lord and his goodness, which is analogous to that promise, that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all our days. For this sort of filial fear does not only not include slavish fear, but absolutely excludes it. “Perfect love casteth out fear,” or at least that sort of fear which hath pain in it. ’Tis not a tormenting, but a godly fear that Christians have, even a fear that worketh by love.

## SEPTEMBER 8.

*Establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.—PSALM XC. 17.*

IT is our wisdom, whatever we undertake, to look to God for a blessing, and not to think that success depends upon our own exertions. These are not to be relaxed on pretence of their inefficiency, but be they what they may, we must still feel that they will not do of themselves, “and that except the Lord build the house, their labour is but vain that build it.” It is in vain that we rise up early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of anxiety, for so he giveth his beloved rest; that is, by enabling them to trust in him, to do their best, and leave the issue to God. There cannot be a more striking instance of the inefficiency of human means used independently, than the apostles fishing all night and taking nothing. They had gone back to their former calling, in despair of success in their after calling, and had set about their old occupation in self-sufficiency, no doubt. Christ then shows them, that even for success in *this*, they must be dependent on him. Why not therefore in that to which he had subsequently called them, even the preaching of his word. Thus out of weakness we are made strong, and through the feeling of our infirmities, in cases where we had most right to trust to our strength, we are taught our real strength in things wherein we distrusted our own weakness.

## SEPTEMBER 9.

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.—PSALM XXXIV. 19.*

WHAT a blessed thing it is to be in the situation of those whom God hath promised to deliver. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin;" and not imputing sin, he will not inflict suffering, but as a covenant blessing, for the trial of our faith, and for the confirmation of our patience, that faith and patience having done their perfect work, we may have the peace of God established within us, and his kingdom of righteousness perfected in us. It is remarkable, what a threatening appearance things are sometimes permitted to wear, which are afterwards set right entirely, and by which we learn that God's purpose in them was our spiritual good, and that they were sent with a direct commission to our souls. "Hear the rod, and him that hath sent it." Such things generally come suddenly, or rather unexpectedly, and are as suddenly removed. "I did them suddenly, (saith God,) that thou mightest not say, mine idol hath done them." Our deliverances thus wear a more providential appearance, and have the stamp of God's mercy upon them, and this makes them sweet, "yea, sweeter than honey and the honey-comb." Whatever we do, let us hold fast God's mercy and love in all our chastisements, that we may look forward to his deliverance, and learn to delight ourselves in the Lord.



## SEPTEMBER 10.

*Let thy loving-kindness and thy truth continually preserve me.—*

PSALM xl. 11.

THE love of God, and the truth of God, are the pillars of our faith, and the grand support of our patience. To believe that God is favourable to us, will enable us to endure whatever he lays upon us. To believe that his word is truth, will give us confidence at all times, and under all circumstances. For he has promised, that he “will never leave us, nor forsake us.” If, therefore, the word of God be true, we have good assurance of his care for us, and of his protecting hand over us, however appearances may be against us. “The Lord is my helper,” said David, “and therefore will I not fear, though the hills be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” Without this, it is in vain that we rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, for so he giveth his beloved rest. While others are striving might and main for themselves, he gives his people rest by believing in his providential care over them, and his concern for them. How blessed is it thus to repose on the faithfulness of a covenant God, and to find both his love and his truth engaged on our behalf. It were vain to multiply considerations, “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

## SEPTEMBER 11.

*Thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.—*

PSALM lxy. 2.

THE Lord hears and answers prayer, especially such prayers as are put up for spiritual benefits, because we have not only a general warrant, but many particular encouragements to ask for these things. First, they are according to the will of God, "for this is his will, even our sanctification;" and next, we are expressly encouraged to ask and have an assurance of receiving, that our joy may be full, and this joy arises from the fulfilment of our prayers in that abundant gift of the grace of life, which the Lord bestows upon all them that ask him. Lord, evermore give us this bread; make us partakers of thy body and blood; enable us to believe in thy righteousness, and so to eat the flesh of the Son of man, and by a cordial acceptance of the forgiveness of sins, to drink his blood. And then enable us to live unto thee, who hast died for us. Thou hast made us in some measure sensible of our obligations to thee, by letting us feel evil, the plague of our own hearts, their proneness to evil, and indisposition to good. Oh, grant us, that being thus sensible, we may express that sense by a closer walk with thee, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt." Lord, grant us this for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

## SEPTEMBER 12.

*Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.—PROVERBS viii. 18.*

How much is righteousness beyond all other riches. It is therefore called "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and who that has a hope of interest in this righteousness would exchange it for any other riches? We may indeed in seasons of temptation be induced to prefer outward benefit to inward, and to despise the hope set before us in the gospel, but while we are in our right minds, we cannot place any thing in comparison with the hope of righteousness by faith. The apostle says, "that he accounted all things but dung," that he might attain to this righteousness; and surely we, who have so little to part with in comparison of him, ought to go and do likewise. He that really cleaves to this righteousness, will despise all other things in comparison of it. Wherefore our Saviour says, that he that hateth not his own life even, cannot be his disciple. There is nothing we cleave to so tenaciously as our own righteousness, nor is it till the righteousness of Christ has been revealed to us, that we are ever thoroughly out of conceit with our own. Then we see that we do not need it; yea, we learn to despise it.

## SEPTEMBER 13.

*Righteousness delivereth from death.*—PROVERBS xi. 4.

AND not only so, but it entitleth to life. It is called the abundance of grace, and of the gifts of righteousness; and it is said, that they who receive it, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. It is the one thing needful to make us happy in this life, and to give us good hope for the life to come. We are apt to think of this and that, as contributing to our spiritual prosperity, but the word of righteousness is all that we need. We want no new doctrine to make us, or to keep us happy. This one truth is sufficient for us, "that Jesus Christ was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." The great difficulty of the spiritual life consists in its simplicity. We are for ever labouring after some new thing, and thinking that we want to know something more, or do something more to make us happy. Hence comes restlessness, which nothing can allay but a renewed belief of that righteousness, which satisfies all the desires of the soul, and completely quiets the spirit, in the belief of our being perfectly in favour with God, as perfectly as if we were already in heaven.

## SEPTEMBER 14.

*God be merciful to me a sinner.*—LUKE xviii. 13.

SOME one used to say that he never saw any one going to be executed, but he considered that he might have been in the same situation himself, had not grace prevented; but I know not whether it is a right feeling to congratulate ourselves upon any superiority to others, even though we give grace the glory. For even the Pharisee said in his address, “ I *thank* thee that I am not as other men are.” He gave God the glory of his immunity from other men’s vices. The publican on the contrary confesses himself a sinner, without any palliation or excuse, and goes down to his house justified in the righteousness of another, even of Christ, who is our righteousness, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. We are indeed all of us careful about many things, many little observances, as the Pharisee was talking of mint, anise, and cummin; but there is one thing needful, even the righteousness of Christ, without which all the others are of no effect, and with which we need not fear to appear before God, though we have them not. This is that good part which shall not be taken from us. It is the pearl of great price, which, whosoever findeth, goeth straitway, and selleth all his other hopes of salvation, and casts himself upon that alone.

## SEPTEMBER 15.

*Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.—*

PSALM CXXVI. 4.

OUR prosperity cometh of God ; “ He lifteth up and he pulleth down. The Lord exalteth them of low degree, and bringeth down the high looks of the proud.” When we go astray, then he chasteneth us, that we may be partakers of his holiness, that is, that we may learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart, that so we may find rest unto our souls. And having learnt of him, and humbled ourselves in his sight, then he exalteth us again; and setteth us up on high from him that puffeth at us. “ For the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but long-suffering to usward.” He does not forget his purposes of grace, or his promises toward us, but he delays them for our benefit, that we may reap the reward, and that they may come to us in a way of believing. We feel our captivity, and cry unto him ; he then answereth us in the joy of our hearts. “ Thus he turns our captivity as the rivers in the south, and having sown in tears, we reap in joy. He putteth a new song in our mouths, even a song of praise to him our God.” All things go well, and we give him all the glory.

## SEPTEMBER 16.

*Ask, and it shall be given you.*—LUKE xi. 9.

THE Scripture abounds in encouragements to prayer, and to faith in prayer, to believing, that what we ask we shall certainly receive. Some things we may ask amiss, but the gift of the Holy Ghost is a certain benefit, and we are more particularly encouraged to ask for this. “If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.” Surely it cannot be considered as a trifling benefit, when we reflect that it includes all happiness, for how can we be otherwise than happy under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He is not as some think, an austere Spirit. Far from it. “The wisdom which is from above,” by which is meant, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” Can there be a more perfect description of a pleasant and tranquil life than this picture affords, and yet it is promised on asking. “Ask, and ye shall receive.” Ask for the influences of the Holy Spirit, to speak peace in your conscience, and to bring joy into your hearts. Be it unto us according to thy word. Grant us thy Holy Spirit, we beseech thee.

## SEPTEMBER 17.

*Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever.—PSALM cxviii. 4.*

THIS is the burthen of the song, “that his mercy endureth for ever,” and truly his mercies are “from everlasting to everlasting upon those that fear him, and upon such as observe his commandments to do them.” And what are those commandments? They are not grievous, but such as involve our own happiness. They consist in believing God to be reconciled to us, and in loving one another, even as he gave us commandment; and have we not every encouragement to believe the love of God, “who spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all,” and in so doing, to find that his mercy is ever more and more towards us. “For he will be ever mindful of his covenant; holy and reverend is his name.” He keepeth covenant for ever, and having promised that his mercy shall be upon us, he will not fail in the performance, but will renew them every morning. Lord, be thou pleased to lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, to shine upon us in the face of thy Son Jesus Christ, to keep us in the belief of the truth, and to multiply all grace and peace unto us, “that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



## SEPTEMBER 18.

*I would have you without carefulness.*—1 CORINTHIANS vii. 32.

It behoves a Christian to live as far as possible without care or fear. We may always imagine to ourselves cases to justify our carefulness, if we are disposed to it. But who could be in a more destitute situation than Christ in the wilderness, and yet he rejected all the devil's suggestions about the making of bread, and left it to God to provide for him. And so when his temptation was ended, "behold angels came and ministered unto him." And thus it is with his people. They are called to prove their faith under unfavourable circumstances, but when the temptation is over, the exercise is made to minister to their establishment in the faith, and angels come and minister unto them. There is nothing by which we are sooner betrayed into care than by the apparent smallness of our concerns, and thinking that we can combat them of ourselves, though there is quite as much presumption in thinking to cope with a small temptation as a large one, and he that hopes in his own strength to overcome any, the least provocation to his anxieties, will find in the end, that the least temptation is too strong for us in our strength, while we may overcome the greatest in Christ's. "Without me ye can do nothing," is as true as "I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me."

## SEPTEMBER 19.

*In seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul.*—2 PETER ii. 8.

THE life of faith is directly opposed to a life of sense. Whatever we see and hear, is for the most part contrary to what we are called upon to believe. The visible things of God may be seen indeed in the things which do appear, but generally speaking, the things which are seen have directly an opposite effect. We are accustomed to look upon them so much as matters of course, that they engender a spirit of atheism in our hearts, and we find it very difficult to remember with such things around us, and things going on just as they were from the beginning, “that there is indeed a God which judgeth the world.” Nor is it only what we look upon that has this tendency. Whatever we hear has the same effect. “The whole world lieth in wickedness,” and nothing is further from men’s thoughts than the belief of a God. They may talk of the Almighty sometimes, but come to apply the doctrine of providence, and you will soon find that their’s is a god who has neither eyes nor ears. He neither regards our proceedings, nor takes notice of our prayers, and yet nothing is more certain than that “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.” If we lose sight of this, we lose sight of providence, and, are, in fact, “without God in the world.” To “believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him,” is one of the first principles of religion.

## SEPTEMBER 20.

*Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*—PSALM I. 15.

IN all the little incidents of life we are privileged to call upon the name of the Lord; not only in matters of importance, but in whatever befalls us, for if the very hairs of our head, which are without sensation, are all numbered, can we suppose that any thing which gives us pain or uneasiness is not taken notice of also. In all trouble, therefore, be it little or much, and in all our difficulties we ought to call upon the name of the Lord, knowing that the least trouble is sufficient to overwhelm us without him, while he is able to support us under the greatest. "Call upon me," saith the Lord, "and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." We are to be careful to give God the glory of our deliverance, and not be like the unthankful lepers. "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" and in nine cases out of ten, we are apt to forget our deliverer. But blessed be God the Holy Ghost, he abides with us to remind us of our mercies, and to make us "willing in the day of his power," to give the glory where it is due. Yea, God the Holy Ghost is our divine remembrancer, to keep us in mind of our mercies, and to help our infirmities in praise as well as in prayer.

## SEPTEMBER 21.

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.—*  
PSALM xxiii. 6.

CAN any one have a better or a happier prospect than this, to be taken care of, yea, the best care, during life, and to have the prospect of a blessed immortality? God himself has promised to be our shield, and our exceeding great reward; our protector from all evil, and more than we could expect in the way of enjoyment. “For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, “for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God.” He gives us a foretaste of the glory which is reserved for us. He gives us to feel in our measure the blessedness of believing on the name of the only begotten Son of God. “Wherefore,” the Apostle says, “Now are we the sons of God.” Now do we experience the benefits of adoption into the family of God. We are made one with Christ, and walk in friendship with God, and “being reconciled unto him by the death of his Son,” we are *now* admitted into fellowship with God, and find our happiness therein.

## SEPTEMBER 22.

*We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

—GALATIANS V. 5.

THIS is the great distinguishing doctrine of the gospel. It is this which makes it differ from all other religions on earth, even the hope of righteousness by faith. Other creeds may profess to teach what is right, but they do not provide a righteousness according to that rule of right which they teach. This it is which alone can satisfy an awakened conscience, and make us content to be what we are, sinners in ourselves, but saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Righteousness sets all things to rights. It not only purifies the conscience, but commands a blessing on our affairs, on our children, our families, and all that concerns us. We stand in Christ, are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and are made partakers of all the blessedness of Christ. In short, we are blessed in him. And as God blessed the house of Obed-edom, because of the ark; so much more will he bless us, because of that robe of righteousness which rests upon us. It becometh well the righteous to be thankful. They have all to be thankful for what man can have. They have God for their Father, Christ for their Saviour, and the Holy Spirit for their continual keeper and remembrancer. He delights to dwell with them, he will reveal himself unto them; yea, God will be their God, and they shall be his people. We shall never be perfectly at rest, without this righteousness. There will always be something wanting. But with it, we shall enjoy the most perfect satisfaction of mind, and the Lord will command his blessing.

## SEPTEMBER 23.

*Ask what I shall give thee.*—1 KINGS iii. 5.

THE very same invitation to asking which is here addressed to Solomon, and seems so great a thing, is held out to all believers in the New Testament, though indeed no Scripture is of private interpretation, and we may appropriate to ourselves by faith, words spoken to believers in all ages. “Ask, and it *shall* be given you,” says our Lord, “seek and ye *shall* find, knock and it *shall* be opened unto you,” and as if this were not enough, it is added and repeated, “For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” This is still further illustrated by the care of parent and child. In short, we are encouraged in every way to let our requests be made known unto God, and it is hinted, that the best request we can make, is for the gift of the Holy Ghost. And when we consider that this gift is in fact synonymous with happiness, what can we ask for better, than that the Lord the Spirit would be pleased to dwell in us, and testify unto us of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and help us in the constant remembrance of these things, least at any time we let them slip. For they are our life; yea, “Christ himself is the way, and the truth, and the life.” Lord Jesus, live in us from this time forth, and *for evermore*.

## SEPTEMBER 24.

*And the Lord blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.—*

2 SAMUEL vi. 12.

THESE things are written, not as matter of history only, but for our instruction upon whom the ends of the world are come, that we may know and believe the love which God has for his people, and that he still blesseth them, because of the ark of the Lord, which is Christ Jesus the Lord. He is, indeed, the true ark, in which all believers find refuge and safety, and by him all that believe receive all blessings and benefits. "In him shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Yea, he is the grand procuring cause of all good to his people; the ark of the covenant, which is the symbol of God's presence and power. He is indeed a consuming fire to his enemies, and as it was with Uzzah, so it is with all those who presume to touch Christ, or his people. "It were better for them that a mill-stone were hanged about their necks, and they cast into the sea." But he is a surety for good to all them that fear his name, and put their trust under the shadow of his wings. To such he "will arise as the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings." He will be their safe-guard by day and by night, and wherever he is, there shall his blessing rest, which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow therewith—rich in righteousness, and rich in the good things of his kingdom, which is a kingdom of righteousness.

## SEPTEMBER 25.

*But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*—LUKE vii. 47.

THIS can never mean that any one has little to be forgiven. For we are all sinners alike in the sight of God. "We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But some have a less *sense* of sin than others, which is the case with all self-righteous professors. They may be believers. They may believe in the forgiveness of sins. They may experience the benefit of forgiveness, but they do not feel the extent of their sins—they do not feel the weight of their obligations, and therefore they love little. Their zeal is only in proportion to the sense of their mercies, and their apprehensions of his being weak, it is no wonder that their sense of gratitude should be weak also. How much does it behove us, therefore, to pray for a right apprehension of our lost condition by nature, that we may entertain a due sense of our restoration by grace. For it is not that we are less sinners than others, that we feel sin less, but that we are more insensible to sin—and hence great outward sinners have an advantage over self-righteous professors. They think more of their sinfulness, because the world thinks more of it, and they consequently entertain warmer apprehension of the love of Christ in the forgiveness of sin. Lord, save us from self-righteousness, which is the death of Christian love.



## SEPTEMBER 26.

*I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.—LUKE xv. 7.*

IT should seem as if the whole glory of God centred in the person of Jesus Christ, and that whatever promoted his glory, and set forth the perfection of his salvation, was most acceptable to God, more acceptable than anything however praiseworthy it might be considered that tends to exalt the creature. What is called moral virtue, may be engaging in itself, and so may uprightness and consistency in one's profession, but still it appears there is more joy in heaven over one sinner rescued from the power of Satan, than over ninety and nine just persons. The glory of Christ is chiefly displayed in the salvation of sinners, and therefore it appears that he regards with more complacency a returning sinner than the most perfect character. We are apt to look at what pleases ourselves, or mankind in general, but God looks at the triumphs of grace over sin, and of righteousness over iniquity. We look too much at our own advancement in the scale of moral worth, but he looks at the advancement of his own glory in the salvation of sinners.

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## SEPTEMBER 27.

*I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.—*

ISAIAH xli. 10.

RIGHTEOUSNESS is that which gives strength and power to the people of God, to go on their way rejoicing. It is indeed the mainspring of all our movements in the ways of God ; but we need winding up occasionally, and therefore God permits things to befall us, which shall have the effect of stirring us up to more diligence in prayer, and to the application of that righteousness to our cares and consciences. He quickens us again by means thereof, and enables us from time to time to set out afresh, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We need to be making continually fresh appeals to this foundation of our faith toward God ; for without righteousness, either our own or some others, it is impossible to please him ; and who that knows himself, would trust to anything in himself for his acceptance before God. No, it is only in the name of Christ, that we can approach with any confidence to a throne of grace, or can hope for any establishment in the peace of God. “ In righteousness shalt thou be established. Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear, and from terror, for it shall not come nigh thee.” Here is the real ground of all fearlessness and real courage. The righteousness of Christ revealed and apprehended by faith.

## SEPTEMBER 28.

*I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.*—EXODUS xxiii. 25.

THIS is the best sanatory regulation that we can have recourse to—to seek the Lord in cases of sickness, who has promised that if we obey his voice, he “will take sickness away from the midst of us.” But how different is this from the practice at present adopted of seeking to the physician, and establishing medical boards, without any more reference to God, than if he had nothing to do with the matter. It is somewhat remarkable that there is no case of pestilence on record in the scriptures, but what was sent upon some provocation, and which was removed as soon as that provocation was discovered, and became a matter of public repentance. What may be the provocation in this particular instance, it is not easy to say, but there certainly is a spirit of insubordination and self-sufficiency abroad at present, which one cannot wonder if God should see it fit to chasten with the rod of his wrath, since the power of man seems altogether insufficient for that purpose. What a happiness it is, under such circumstances to be in the ark, and to have his seal on our foreheads, and that blood of sprinkling on our door-posts, lest he that destroyeth should touch us. And how much does it become all such as have access to a throne of grace, to entreat the God of their mercies on behalf of the people, that they may be brought to a sense of their sins, whatever they be, and may turn unto him that smiteth them.

## SEPTEMBER 29.

*My soul is even as a weaned child.*—PSALM CXXXI. 2.

SUCH is the only happy disposition of spirit. "Except ye be converted, (says our Saviour,) and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is our happiness to be so humbled, to be brought to feel our own insufficiency to such a degree, that we shall appeal from it, and exercise the most simple dependence on Christ for all things pertaining unto life and unto godliness. "He is the giver of all, and without him we can do nothing." We may think we can do many things, but it is a mistake, and those who think so will find their mistake in the end. "Let as many therefore as be perfect, be thus minded," namely, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, "having no confidence in the flesh," no confidence in the righteousness of the creature, nor in its sufficiency. For God has declared against both, and has commended us to Christ for both, saying, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." This is the way to attain to true meekness and lowliness of heart, to see all in ourselves as nothing, and every thing in the person of Christ. He has done and suffered all for us, to procure rest for our souls. There is no rest without righteousness. There is no peace to the wretched, and such we are all by nature. "For there is none righteous, there is none that doeth good, no not one." Wean us, O Lord, from our own righteousness therefore, and let us be wedded to thine.

## SEPTEMBER 30.

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*—EPHESIANS ii. 10.

How low does he lay the pride of good works. The good that is done upon earth, the Lord doeth it himself. He fixes it; he fulfils it. All our works are appointed of him; they are all performed by him. He gives the will, he gives the opportunity, and he enables us to embrace it effectually, so as to "bring forth fruit unto perfection." This doctrine of our being predestinated to good works, may have another salutary effect also on the believer. It may teach him not to be in a bustle. He can neither forward nor hinder the purposes of grace. "God *will* work and none shall let." "He *will* fashion us as vessels unto honour, fitted for his use." Neither will it slacken our diligence in the ways of the Lord, that belief of the preordination of all things. It will rather measure it, for we shall go on with more confidence, if we can but believe in a favourable issue. Nothing is so destructive of action, as indecision, but when we can realize the appointment of God in our proceedings, we shall then go on with courage, being fully assured of success.

## OCTOBER 1.

*Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.—AMOS ix. 9.*

THE Lord has promised to be with his people in all circumstances, even in the sharpest exercise, and to take care that they shall not suffer loss by them; no, not so much as a hair of their head shall fall to the ground without their Heavenly Father. It is the want of belief in this, that makes us so anxious and distrustful of God in his several dealings with us. We do not give him credit for keeping us and our faith, which he has promised to do, for he says to all his disciples, as he said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." His intercession is as effectual for us, as it was for him; and blessed be God, for the experience to this day, that our faith is not only not weakened, but confirmed by our exercises. It is cured of presumption, but it is strengthened in itself. Not one jot or tittle of it is lost. It comes out of the fire full weight, pure gold, refined from the dross. Let not any believer therefore *fear* those exercises which God is pleased to try him with, but rather believe that they shall aid in the establishment of his faith, and in his comfortable assurance of God's providence and good will towards him. "So be it, Lord Jesus."

## OCTOBER 2.

*He that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey.—*

ISAIAH lix. 15.

THIS day is this Scripture fulfilled, Whosoever departeth from iniquity, and setteth himself in earnest to seek God, “maketh himself a prey.” Or as it is in the margin, “is accounted mad.” So it was with Paul, and so it is with all the followers of Jesus, “who follow him in sincerity and truth.” They must make up their minds to be accounted mad; and if they are to be so accounted, it matters little in what way, or by what means the cross comes upon us, so as we have the approbation of God and our own conscience. For if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments. It is better to be despised of men, and had in honour with God, than to be highly-esteemed among men, with the curse or even the frown of God upon us. For when he hideth his face, who is able to abide it; and when he gives peace, who then can create evil. The Lord blesseth, and we shall be blessed, but the good word of men can do us little good, neither can their scandal do us any harm.

## OCTOBER 3.

*This is the true God, and eternal life.*—1 JOHN v. 20.

WITH which compare John xvii. 3. “ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Compare it, I say, and then declare, whether Jesus Christ is not here spoken of as the same Being to whom that most sublime prayer is addressed, and whether, consequently, he is not one with the Father, essentially as regards his divine nature. “ I, and the Father,” says he, “ are one ;” and again, “ Thou in me, and I in thee.” Yea, Lord Jesus, I acknowledge thee as my God and I look unto thee to perform all things for me. I bless and adore thy name that thou hast hitherto done so, and that thou hast never failed nor forsaken me, when I have applied unto thee. Oh, let not my rebellious heart depart from thee in time to come, but be thou ever present with me and mine, to keep us in all our ways, to exercise thy fatherly superintendence over us, and to convince us that thou carest for us. So shall we live without care or fear, until we are received into thy heavenly family, and “ know even as we are known.”



## OCTOBER 4.

*Praying in the Holy Ghost.—Jude 20.*

NOT in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, in the simple language of the heart, and "God who searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." I verily believe that the most effectual prayers, are *heart-prayers*, and such as never find utterance at all. If we feel any particular want, or labour under any particular exercise, and we look up to the Lord for relief, without speaking a word, or if we speak, it is in the language of him "God be merciful to me a sinner," and this man "went down to his house *justified*." He felt in himself that his sins were forgiven. So do we, unto this day feel in ourselves that we are heard, that our persons and our prayers are accepted. For "he that believeth hath the witness in himself," God testifying of his gifts, that they are accepted, and that with as much certainty, and with as full an assurance, as if fire came down from heaven and consumed them on the altar. Oh, for more of this assurance in our intercourse with God, that knowing he heareth us, we may know also that we have the petitions we desired of him.

## OCTOBER 5.

*The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.—*  
1 CORINTHIANS XV. 56.

THE sting of death, and of all evils less than death, is sin. Whatever disquiets us, in short, or causes us uneasiness, derives its power so to do from sin. Guilt is at the bottom of all our distresses. Could we but be perfectly persuaded that we are freely and fully discharged from all sin in the sight of the Lord, we should always be happy;—but it is secret sin that preys upon our comforts, and persuades us to look at ourselves as we are in ourselves, and so to look away from the Lord Jesus Christ, as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” “The strength of sin is the law.” A legal spirit is at the bottom. We look at the law and we find that the law condemns sin, and we feel also that we are sinners, and therefore we conclude that the law condemns us. But Christ was manifest that he might take away sin, “He being made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” The greatest blessedness under the sun is a clear apprehension of this one blessed truth, that “the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin,” and that we are discharged from *all* our sins, known or unknown, in the sight of God, by “that one offering which perfecteth for ever all them that are sanctified thereby.”

## OCTOBER 6.

*She that tarried at home divided the spoil.*—PSALM lxxviii. 12.

How amply was this fulfilled in the case of Martha and Mary. When Martha heard that the Lord was coming, she went out forthwith to meet him, and surely there was no harm in this, but Mary tarried at home. She sat still in the house, till she heard that Jesus was come, and had called for her, and then she was up quickly and went to him, and a blessed thing it is when we are enabled to sit still in the house till Jesus calls for us, and not be running here and there seeking water and finding none. Such, when Jesus really calls, are always ready to go, and though they tarry at home till he calls, they are sure to divide the spoil at the last. So it was with Mary. She saw the miracle, and many of those who came to her, believed ; so that she also saw the blessed effects of the miracle on the hearts of the unbelieving multitude. This is that same Mary who sat at the feet of Jesus, while Martha was cumbered with much serving, though that serving was indeed waiting on the Lord. Yet “ Mary had chosen that better part, which was not to be taken away from her.” And how many plausible reasons do we find of active service, rather than patient acquiescence, and humble submission to the will of God. And yet what can be a more suitable employment for a humbled sinner than that of sitting at the feet of Jesus, and hearing the words of everlasting life. Lord, save us from our carnal activities, and save us from ourselves, and grant unto us that we may not only tarry at home till thou callest us, but that after we are called, we may be content to listen, while others, perhaps, are more active but less attentive.

## OCTOBER 7.

*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.*—2 CORINTHIANS vi. 17.

THIS sounds conditional, though in fact there is no condition in it, for the Lord himself is the separator of his people, and makes them “willing in the day of his power,” willing to part with the world and all that it contains, for the love of Christ. But it is implied nevertheless, in this Scripture, that we are called upon to make the sacrifice before we experience the benefit, and to quit the world, before we are sensibly adopted into the family of God. We run all risks, and take all ventures; like the lepers who said, “If we remain here, we shall certainly die, and if we go, we can but die,” and therefore we will quit this world, which lieth in wickedness, and betake ourselves to Christ on the mere peradventure of his mercy. ‘It may be that the Lord will be gracious unto us at the voice of our cry.’ So saith the believer on his first approaches to God. And what is the answer of God. “I will receive you, and be a father unto you, and will take you for sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” Thus does he send forth “the Spirit of adoption into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father,” and encourage us to come unto him, that we may be saved from the miseries of the world.

## OCTOBER 8.

*We have no might against this great company that cometh against us ; neither know we what to do : but our eyes are upon thee.*—2 CHRONICLES XX. 12.

IT is never mentioned in Scripture that any called upon the name of the Lord, but it is recorded also that he was delivered. The one is a necessary consequence of the other. And we may take notice in our own experience, that whenever we have been enabled to commit any matter to the Lord, and to put our trust in him, however unpromising appearances might be at the time, or however powerful the opposition might be against us, we have also succeeded in spite of it. It is the blessed privilege of every believer in Jesus to call upon him in the time of trouble. And we may do it with the most perfect confidence, when we recollect that we have his righteousness as our security for being heard, and for obtaining an answer of peace. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes, and we never succeed better than when rejecting all other confidences, we depend wholly upon him. He that forgives sins can remove all other difficulties, and make our way plain before us. And he has promised that he will not leave us nor forsake us. Let us therefore trust in him at all times, and under all circumstances.

## OCTOBER 9.

*I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.—*

PHILIPPIANS iv. 11.

THIS is the great secret of happiness, both as to our temporal and our spiritual concerns; for how can we be happy while we are wishing things to be otherwise than they are. It was in this spirit of contentment that one said, ‘I am content with my place and station, and pray for nothing but more thankfulness for what I have.’ It were well if we were all of the same opinion, and were on our guard continually against any the least inroad of dissatisfaction, such as wishing for a change, or looking forward to this or that attraction in our lot. The Lord knoweth best what we have need of, and we may be sure will do the best. Of this we may rest satisfied; and more than this it behoves us not to wish, either as to temporals or spirituals. Let us be content with that measure of grace which he has vouchsafed to us, and not repine at other attainments. Unto us it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe on his name; to have received his righteousness, and to be resting on his arm; and surely this ought to be sufficient for us—even his righteousness and strength. Surely shall one say, “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength,” and in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

## OCTOBER 10.

*Thy sins be forgiven thee.*—MATTHEW ix. 2.

THERE is nothing recorded in history of the deaths of saints and martyrs more striking than what is told of the death of the Marquis of Argyle, who on going to the place of execution said, that he had had that assurance again confirmed to him—"Thy sins are forgiven thee;" and truly this is all we can hope for of happiness in life or in death, namely, an assurance of the forgiveness of sins. It is the great characteristic doctrine of the Gospel, and the grand privilege of the believer to *know* that his sins are forgiven; and for this assurance he is not even required to wait till the hour of death. He may enjoy it in life, and have the testimony of the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God, and as such, that his sins are forgiven, and his person justified in the sight of God. "*Now* are we the sons of God," says the Apostle, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But now, even at this present time, are we the sons of God, and assured of salvation from all the guilt and misery of sin. We have, like Enoch, this testimony, that we are well-pleasing unto God, not for works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his own grace in Christ Jesus.

## OCTOBER 11.

*I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds.*

—ISAIAH xl. 29—31.

WE are too apt to say in every case, my wound is incurable; and to think that it will never be otherwise. But "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can shine into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ," and to convince us, that as all power in heaven and on earth is his; so he can do whatsoever he will for his people, can turn their captivity, and put a new song in their mouths, "even a song of praise unto him their God." It is the greatest of all praises, to be enabled to make our appeal unto God, to trust in him for all things, "and in all things by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving to let our requests be made known unto him." For there is no case so desperate, which he cannot relieve; and no wound so incurable, which he cannot heal. He woundeth, and his hands make whole. The same power which can humble the proud sinner, can raise up the humbled saint. The Lord is "a helper of the helpless, and a judge of the widow is God in his holy habitation." "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but they that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength."



## OCTOBER 12.

*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.—MATTHEW vi. 33.*

AND not only so, but a confidence about them, for if we can trust our souls on the warrant of God's word, we may well trust our outward concerns. But the truth is, that we are much more indifferent than we ought to be about our spiritual welfare, and much too anxious about our outward prosperity. However, there is a cure even for this when we feel it, in the fulness of him who filleth the hungry with good things, when he sendeth the rich empty away. There is no better test of our spirituality, than our anxieties. For he that is spiritual, careth for the things of the Spirit; and he that is carnal, for the things of the flesh. There is no greater truth, than that spirituality is the death of care, for it not only diverts our anxieties, but supersedes them. All that we need desire is included in the promise, and we ought to desire no more. I do not think there can be a greater blessing upon earth, than a continual apprehension of the value of that blood and righteousness which is our perfection in all things, and an abiding sense of our interest in it. Lord, evermore give us this bread, and this living water, that we come no more to draw out of those broken cisterns of human happiness, which can hold no water. Lord, I believe it shall be unto us according to thy word, "that they who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. Help thou mine unbelief."

## OCTOBER 13.

*And no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.—DANIEL vi. 23.*

DANIEL is a remarkable instance of the blessing which attends an open profession of the truth of God. He did not cloak his profession, but with his windows open, he prayed, and sang praise unto God three times a day. This brought upon him the persecuting hand of his enemies, it is true; but what was the result? why, in every instance a further exaltation. Whereas, had he disguised his profession, he might not have incurred the wrath of his enemies, but he would not have experienced the delivering power of his God, nor the favour of his prince as he did. Such occasion of their enmity was made the means of further illustrating that power, and confirming that favour. It tended also much to the glory of God; for there was a decree made, that whosoever should speak anything amiss of the God of Daniel, should be put to death. Oh! that Christians were equally careful, that nothing should be spoken amiss of the God of their salvation. Oh! that we did not put Christ to an open shame as we do, by our backsliding conduct, and indecision in the sight of men. Lord, grant us thy Holy Spirit, that we may no more be double-minded; but may serve thee henceforth in sincerity and truth.

## OCTOBER 14.

*Who is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe.—*

1 TIMOTHY iv. 10.

How little do the world consider that all the common mercies of life, are the fruits and effects of Christ's intercession and mediation. Not one day of sunshine, not one hour of immunity from pain, but is the effect of his righteousness and intercession on behalf of God's creatures. Otherwise "the wicked would be at once turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." Thus Christ "is the Saviour of all men, but especially of them that believe." They have peculiar mercies; they are made partakers of a new nature, they are admitted into the kingdom of his grace, and have an entrance administered to them abundantly into the privileges of that kingdom: "they are made kings and priests unto God." God is become their father, and they his children. Christ is their Saviour in a peculiar way—not only of their bodies, as he is in some measure even to unbelievers, but also of their souls. He dwells in them by his Spirit, and reveals himself unto them, as he doth not unto the rest of the world. He makes known unto them the mysteries of his kingdom, and gives them to understand them, and to embrace them, and to live upon them. Yea, he gives them his Spirit; according to his word that he would send them "another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, who should guide them into all truth." Thus he does all things for them in this life, and finally he receives them unto himself in life everlasting.

## OCTOBER 15.

*Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.—*

PSALM x. 17.

THERE is a wonderful correspondence betwixt God's purposes and our desires, because he prepares our hearts, and putteth into them such desires as he means to fulfil. Thus when we are going to obtain any spiritual benefit, he possesses our hearts with the exceeding desirableness of it, insomuch that it appears to us above and beyond all other benefits, and then he bestows it upon us in answer to such desires. Thus is it that he prepareth the heart, and his ear hearkeneth thereto. His ear is always open to our spiritual necessities, and not only so, but he also leads us to commit our temporal want to him, not only in the way of direct petitions, but secret desires. He reads our hearts, and he reads our circumstances. He knoweth what we have need of before we ask, and he knoweth our imperfections in asking. He supplies all our deficiencies, and exercises his compassion upon us exactly as our necessities require. It is not as if we had to do with an ignorant judge, who knew nothing of our case, for the Lord knoweth intimately all that concerns us. And what is still more, he not only knows, but enters into it. He knows it with a knowledge of interest and concern for us. "*He careth for us.*" What a comfort ought this to be to us in all our exercises, that he with whom we have to do is a most loving Father, who tenderly cares for us, and has all power in heaven and on earth, in spirituals and in temporals, to bestow upon us whatever is good, and whatever he has put it into our hearts to desire.

## OCTOBER 16.

*They shall go in and out, and find pasture.*—JOHN I. 9.

I KNOW not what this means, unless it alludes to the different states of mind in which we are at different times; and I verily believe there is as much, if not more, to be learned from our empty frames as from our full ones, inasmuch as we are taught in these seasons of self-emptiness, not to trust in ourselves, but in him only in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily. How subtle a thing is the Spirit of self-adoration, and how easily mistaken for a better principle. We desire that our fruit may abound not for the glory of God, but that we may be pleased with ourselves, and may take comfort from our own proficiency. But still we find that our own unfruitfulness follows us still, and well it is so, for better is it that we should be without usefulness than without humility; and God only knows when we are fit to be trusted with such a measure of grace as we desire for his service. Let us wait therefore in patience upon him, and commit the keeping of our souls unto him, as unto a faithful Creator, for faithful is he which has called us to glory and virtue, who also in due time will do it, that is, will accomplish our desires, and fulfil our requests.

## OCTOBER 17.

*By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord,—that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens.*—GENESIS xxii. 16, 17.

WITH what perfect confidence may we resign all our benefits into the hands of the Lord, who not only returns them, but returns them with usury. Thus Abraham not only received his son back again as it were from the dead, but received a promise at the same time, and that confirmed by an oath, of the multiplication of his seed, even as the sand which is by the sea shore, innumerable. Oh, that we had more of this faith, more willingness to turn to God with our mercies, knowing that they are in safe keeping, and that he is able to renew them again. But our evil heart of unbelief will ever be stepping in and suggesting, that our hope has perished from the Lord, when perhaps we are never nearer the fulfilment of his promises, and the attainment of our desires. Seeing that our crosses grow out of our comforts, there is no greater benefit than to sit loose to them, provided we do not indulge in a discontented spirit, or despise the blessings of Providence. For it appears that Abraham did not give up Isaac from a willingness to part with him altogether, but from a persuasion that he should be restored to him even by a miracle, accounting that God was able to raise him even from the dead. In fact it was from a faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, by which true faith we all profess to live.

## OCTOBER 18.

*In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.—PSALM lxxi. 1.*

YEA in thee do I put my trust. Thy name also is so nigh, and that do thy wondrous works declare. If we really set ourselves to observe the wonderful works of Providence, we shall never want occasions. The preventing Providence of God is not less wonderful than his other performances on our behalf. He indeed performs all things for us, but nothing more manifestly than those circumstances, by which we are prevented from fulfilling our purposes, when those purposes are but for our comfort. The Lord knoweth those that are his, and he also knoweth what is most for their happiness, and what is most hostile to it. It is he, who orders all things in heaven and on earth, even the minutest circumstances are under his direction, and he has promised that all things shall work together for good to them that love him, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Can we then doubt that even our smallest disappointments are all of his ordination, much more our disappointments in matters of greater importance. Our successes and reverses are all in his hands, and our business is, whatever befalls, to say, "Thy will be done."

## OCTOBER 19.

*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.—REVELATION xii. 11.*

THE first requisite for victory, is the blood of the Lamb; and secondly, an open profession of our faith in him. For “with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” We derive great strength from the open profession of the name of Christ. He giveth more grace, the more we make use of that which he has already given, and there is no use we can make of it so honourable to him, as the open acknowledgment of his goodness before the sons of men; the word of our testimony in favour of a life of faith, in preference to a life of sense, as of carnal observances. We are the true circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh. This kind of worship is indeed the gift of God the Holy Ghost: we can no more rejoice in Christ Jesus, than we can reject fleshly confidences without him, but through him we can do all things: we can lay aside all dependencies on the flesh, or on outward helps, and trust ourselves entirely to “that wisdom which is from above, and which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”



## OCTOBER 20.

*For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness.—*

PSALM xxi. 3.

THE Lord is always *going before* us with his mercies, anticipating our wants and our wishes. He fulfilleth the desires of the heart, for he prepareth the heart, and his ear hearkeneth thereto. To this agree the words of the Apostle, that “he which searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Be thou pleased, O Lord, to put into our hearts such desires as thou meanest to grant, and to that end grant that they may be such as thou art willing to bestow—above all, grant that we may be really desirous of the gift of thy Spirit, which is thy first and best gift, and that which ensures the enjoyment of all the rest—He being indeed a Spirit of Righteousness, to testify unto the righteousness of Christ, and by virtue of that testimony to anoint us with the oil of joy, as he did our Head, of whom it was said, “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of joy above thy fellows.” We have the same righteousness, and in our measure are partakers of the same joy.

## OCTOBER 21.

*These are they which follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth.—*  
REVELATION xiv. 4.

IN prosperity or adversity, in sickness or in death, the presence of Christ sanctifies all, and reconciles us to all, so that wherever we are, and whatever we do, his presence goes along with us and gives us peace. This makes us willing to follow him in all his dispensations, both of providence and grace; in this consists the excellence of real religion, that while we see Christ before, we are never discouraged. Wherefore the Apostle says, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God." By this same faith do we also "endure, as seeing him who is invisible," and more especially as seeing Jesus before us on the way having endured the same sufferings, and having been "tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin." Lord, let us never shrink from any cross, however grievous, which thou hast ordained, and for the enduring of which we have thy example and grace, "for in that he hath suffered being tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted," and let us look forward to the same joyful hope, to the recompense of the reward, not for our sufferings but thine, that we may thus cheerfully "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

## OCTOBER 22.

*These all died in faith.*—HEBREWS xi. 13.

THE deaths of believers in all ages are a wonderful confirmation of the truth of scripture, and of the reality and blessedness of believing. In all ages, and under all circumstances they have died in faith, expressing a firm reliance on the promises of God, and unshaken faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. To this day we have the same evidences and many striking proofs of faith in the several parts of the covenant, rejoicing in the forgiveness of sins, which is the characteristic doctrine of the gospel provision of grace, thus whilst one dies another dies in the "full assurance of faith," as to his eternal salvation. "Not many mighty, not many noble are called," but God hath chosen some of all sorts to bear testimony to his truth, and to shew that no circumstances preclude the exercise of his grace towards the children of men. Who can read these affecting accounts without almost wishing himself in the place of the dying saint, or of the martyr, and yet it is God only, who can give strength in the day of trial or adversity, and enable us to glorify him, whether it be by life or by death. Without which we cannot say, to us to live is Christ, but to die gain. Lord, grant that it may be so.

## OCTOBER 23.

*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith—HEBREWS xi. 7.*

NOAH may be said to have been the first reformer, a preacher of righteousness; and truly there is nothing will stand against the tide of human corruption, but the righteousness of Christ, and any reform founded on the righteousness of the creature, cannot therefore but be fallacious and uncertain. Our godliness is as the morning dew, and any amendment depending on such goodness, must be as transient also. Let us rather be like Noah, dependent on that righteousness which remaineth for ever, and then may we hope for a lasting amendment, both of manners and instructions. And though we condemn the world by so doing, yet shall we become heirs of the righteousness which is by faith. Nor is it possible to act on the faith of this righteousness, without condemning the world, for the world, though it lieth in wickedness, is, notwithstanding, a self-righteous world, and indeed its wickedness lieth mainly in its self-righteousness. For had the world believed Noah a preacher of righteousness, they would have believed also their own sinful state, and would have prepared like him, an ark to the saving of their souls. That ark is Christ Jesus, the gospel is still warning us of our danger and our safety, and yet people instead of going into this ark, are busying themselves about things which do not concern them, and instead of reforming themselves, are all employed in reforming the state. Oh that all were persuaded that reform must begin at home, and that it must begin in righteousness, if ever it end in salvation.

## OCTOBER 24.

*The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.—*

REVELATION xix. 8.

THIS also is the wedding garment, even the righteousness of faith, in which we stand perfectly justified before the throne of God, and without which, whoever presumes to come in to the marriage supper of the Lamb, will be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For if no other righteousness will stand the test of an enlightened conscience; "how shall it stand the judgment of a jealous God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, unless it be covered by the garb of righteousness." And surely we do great dishonour to this righteousness, in refusing to build our hopes of pardon upon it, when we find it has given access thereto to so many glorified saints. "This day, (says our Saviour,) thou shalt be with me in paradise;" and what had the thief to trust to, but the righteousness of him whom he saw upon the cross, not for his own sins; for this man, said he, hath done nothing amiss, but for the sins of others, and more particularly for the sins of him who confessed that he was himself suffering justly the due reward of his deeds. Oh for more of this self-condemning spirit, accompanied with a living faith in him "who suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God." And now "being made nigh by the blood of his cross, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

## OCTOBER 25.

*I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.  
These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.—  
ISAIAH xlii. 16.*

**WHAT** a blessed promise is this, wherein the Lord engages not only to clear up all our doubts and difficulties, but in the mean time not to forsake us, yea, to maintain our faith and hope in God, to enable us in spite of all appearances, to hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, and against hope to believe in hope, because he is faithful that hath promised. Thus in the case of Peter, though Satan desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat, yet Christ prayed for him, that his faith might not fail, and thus, even to this day, he maketh intercession for us, when we are not able to make intercession for ourselves. Yea, when our faith is at so low an ebb, that we know not what to think or which way to look, then Jesus looks upon us, makes darkness to be light before us, and crooked things straight unto us. These things he does for us, and forsakes us not. "Let your conversation therefore, (says the apostle, be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have." For he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." So that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what flesh shall do unto me."

## OCTOBER 26.

*So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord.*—2 CHRONICLES xxvii. 6.

RELIGION and prosperity are connected in the Scripture, as cause and effect. We never read of any one serving the Lord, or seeking the Lord in good earnest, but we find that he prospered in so far as he sought him. The Bible is full of encouragements on this subject. Jotham, and Uzziah, and Amaziah, are all instances that as long as they sought the Lord, he caused them to prosper, but when they turned from him to serve other gods, the Lord also turned away from them to do them good. It is our mercy however, that he has promised never to turn away from us, and this by virtue of a new and a better covenant. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them; I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." So that they will not turn away from him, neither will he turn away from them. Having loved his own, which were in the world, exposed to all the temptations of the world, and no doubt at times overcome by them, yet having loved them, he loved them unto the end. What a gracious state of acceptance is this? what an indefeasible inheritance, not to be forfeited by our own misconduct, but secured to us by the everlasting purpose of God.

## OCTOBER 27.

*But he said I will not eat until I have told mine errand.—*

GENESIS xxiv. 33.

“MY meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” First, the Lord’s work, and then our own. Even the most needful is to be postponed to his service. “First, make for me, and then shalt thou make for thee and thy son,” said Elijah, “and the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruise of oil fail until the day that the Lord sent rain upon the earth. Thus it is that we are commanded to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added, saith the Lord.” And I verily believe that our own affairs never go better than when we are occupied with the Lord. “For him that honoureth me, I will honour; and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” Lord, grant unto thy servants, that they may indeed be intent on the one thing needful, and may devote themselves to seek thy glory, and to pray for the establishment of thy kingdom, not only on their own hearts, but also on the hearts of others, so shall we be thy disciples. “Yea, Lord Jesus, we look unto thee to abide in us, that we may bring forth much fruit, for without thee we can do nothing;” and so far from being anxious for the prosperity of thy kingdom in the hearts of others, we can do nothing to promote it ourselves, even in our own. But if we abide in thee, and thy words abide in us, then shall we bring forth much fruit, and be jealous for thy glory, that thy words may run upon earth and be glorified, even as in us, through Jesus Christ.



## OCTOBER 28.

*And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man.—*

GENESIS xxxix. 2.

THERE is no true prosperity without the Lord. A man may have riches in possession, but a “man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth.” But the Lord maketh rest, and he addeth no sorrow therewith. Yea, the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, even in the absence of outward riches, for it is written, Hath not the Lord chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of his kingdom, which he hath prepared for them that love him. And truly with this blessing we are rich at all times, and under all circumstances; and without it, whatever we possess beside, we are really poor, however increased in goods, we are still poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked. “But blessed be God for a better inheritance, even an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Blessed be God for that prosperity, which has the word of God for its foundation, and the blood and righteousness of Christ for its security, which, resting on these immutable things, brings all things eventually into subjection to the will of God. And that will is so interwoven with our good, that we need not fear but the event will answer our utmost expectations, so that we shall have cause to say, The lot hath fallen unto us in a good place, yea, we have a goodly heritage.

## OCTOBER 29.

*That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.*—MATTHEW ii. 23.

WE may observe from this history what wonderful ways God takes to fulfil his word, without the subjects of that fulfilment being conscious themselves what they are doing. Thus the parents of Jesus, through fear of Archilaus, turn aside into the city of Nazareth, that the word of the Lord which he spake by his servants the prophets concerning his Son Jesus, might be fulfilled, and thus even our fears, as well as our wrath, are made to praise him, and the remainder will he restrain, that is, he will not suffer them to operate any longer than they are for his glory and our good. What a blessed consideration is it to every Christian, that all things are made to minister to God's glory, and that "where sin hath abounded, grace does much more abound." We may observe by the way too, that if Jesus was called a Nazarene, we ought not to shrink from any name of contempt with which a wicked world may be pleased to brand us. "The servant is not above his Lord." If therefore they have called the master of the house by such names of contempt, saying, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth," how much more his servants. And how patiently ought we to put up with any insults we may meet with by the way. For we, indeed, suffer justly, and whatever we meet with we deserve, "but this man hath done nothing amiss." Grant us, therefore, patience and perseverance under all our crosses, O Lord, but above all, grant us thankfulness for thy great mercies.

## OCTOBER 30.

*He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.*—1 CORINTHIANS i. 31.

WHAT a blessing it is that we, having no righteousness of our own, should have such a righteousness provided for us, as is amply sufficient to present us before the throne of God without spot, and unblameable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ—a righteousness so much better than the angels, inasmuch as Jesus hath by an inheritance obtained a better name than they, being the Son of God, the express image of his person. Therefore his righteousness is the righteousness of God, and we ought to value it as such, and to consider that nothing short of the utmost insanity could lead mankind to reject this righteousness, and to repose themselves on a righteousness of works, which is but at best a righteousness of the creature. Let him therefore, that glorieth, glory in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in his righteousness, for while we are going about to establish our own righteousness, we must necessarily fall short of the righteousness of Christ; seeing “Christ is the end of the law,” and of all legal struggles, “for righteousness to every one that believeth.” “The law enters that the offence may abound, but where sin hath abounded, there shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.”

## OCTOBER 31.

*Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*

PSALM CXIX. 67.

Two things may be observed on this passage, first, that it does not necessarily imply any heavy affliction, but any thing grievous to the flesh or to the Spirit, that the Christian may be exercised withal, though as the Apostle says, our consolations bear some proportion perhaps to our afflictions, and we cannot expect the same benefit from the passing exercises of the day that we derive from more afflicting crosses, that have been sent on purpose to purge sin, under the superintendence of the ever-blessed Spirit of God, who is himself the only discoverer and subduer of sin, by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The next thing to be observed is, that it does not merely imply the *moral* law, but rather that law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which alone can make us free from the law of sin and of death. We can only learn this law under the operations of that same Spirit spoken of above, and one principal branch of this law, which the Spirit teaches by afflictive providences, is the law of separation from a wicked world. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you," but when we will not come out according to his word, and on the strength of his commandment, he sends the cross to fetch us out, and make it effectual for that purpose.

## NOVEMBER 1.

*Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*—1 TIMOTHY iv. 8.

WHAT can contribute more to the comfort of this present life than to enjoy a continual peace in our consciences. It is indeed a continual feast, and gives a relish to all our enjoyments, knowing that “the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin,” and that we are for ever accepted in his sight. He hath made us accepted in the beloved, and we have access with him, to a throne of grace. We may ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. If a great prince were to make us such a promise, how much we should think of it, and yet how little do we think of the promise of Christ, “whose kingdom ruleth over all, and whose dominion endureth throughout all generations.” I am persuaded that Christians generally make far too scanty a use of the privilege of prayer. The encouragements in scripture to ask, are so large, and our petitions so limited, that they can by no means be made to run parallel with each other. Now it cannot be supposed that God has promised more than he means to perform. It must therefore be the case, that *we* do not ask half so much as we ought.

## NOVEMBER 2.

*For that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare.—*

PSALM lxxv. 1.

WE have daily proofs of an overruling providence. He has promised to be with his people at all times, and that his hand shall be known towards them. And surely his hand is seen in turning their captivity, even as the rivers in the south. “He bringeth down to the grave, and he lifteth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.” There is no case so desperate but he can apply a remedy; and no evil so urgent but he can remove it. And he does deliver his praying people from all evil, though he bear long with them. “Yea, though they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, his rod and his staff comfort them.” His hand is known towards them, and his everlasting arms are underneath them. He “maketh all their bed in their sickness,” and he healeth all their sorrows. He healeth the broken in heart, and giveth medicine to heal their sickness. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare his wonderful works which are towards the children of men; that they would shew forth his praise in the great congregation, and tell of all his marvellous acts.

## NOVEMBER 3.

*Hope deferred maketh the heart sick : but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.*—PROVERBS xiii. 12.

How apt we are to take one clause of any passage in Scripture, and to omit the other, to talk of the sickness of hope deferred, and to forget the enlivening influences of expectation gratified. There is a great pleasure in the communion of saints—perhaps no greater upon earth, saving always the honour of divine grace, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, though indeed the communion of saints derives its principal lustre from the fellowship of the Spirit—seeing that they who “are joined to the Lord, are one spirit,” and their communion consists principally in the outpouring of the Spirit upon them. The Lord is pleased to be more especially present among them, when they are assembled together, and has promised to meet his people when they are gathered together to meet him. Nevertheless he does not require a large assembly, for he says, “where *two* or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,” so that it is not the multitude of persons assembled, but the sincerity of those, who are so met together, that the Lord principally regards in his visitations. Lord, let our expected meeting be one of this kind. Let us be gathered together in *spirit* and in truth—in thy name indeed, waiting for the manifestation of thy mercy, and let our meeting be “in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace.”

## NOVEMBER 4.

*Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter.*—MARK XVI. 7.

THE privilege of Peter who had denied the Lord, arose from the fulness of that forgiving and recovering grace which thought upon Peter, even as he had turned and looked upon Peter when he softened him to weep bitterly for his sin; and perhaps we are never nearer the manifestation of the divine favour than when we feel ourselves least deserving of it. For my own part I acknowledge my own infirmity in this respect, and I doubt not that the same grace which was sufficient for Peter to overcome it, will also be sufficient for me. So that I would rather glory in it, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Yea, Lord, I would glory in all my infirmities, and in none more than my inability to bear the cross with patience, even when I feel I deserve it, but thou hast promised to carry both it and me, and “keep me by thy mighty power through faith unto salvation.” Let me not therefore be discouraged, nor doubt but that thou wilt send a message of grace to me as well as to Peter, that thou art risen from the dead, and hast received all power to bless thy people, and to bestow upon them all needful grace. In all our disquietudes, O Lord, enable us thus to believe that thou wilt make darkness to be light before us, and show us that thou art risen indeed, when we are desponding like them who “trusted that it should have been he who should have delivered Israel.” Give us thy strength of heart, we beseech thee.



## NOVEMBER 5.

*Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer ; thy name is from everlasting.—ISAIAH lxiii. 16.*

WHAT a blessing it is for the people of God that they stand not by the judgment of man. For “man seeth not as God seeth.” Man looketh on the outward appearance of prosperity or of adversity, but God looketh on the heart. He knows when we are humbled, and “he respecteth the humble, but the proud he beholdeth afar off.” Lord, make us such as thou wouldest have us to be, “meek and lowly in heart, that we may find rest unto our souls.” For thou givest more grace, thou givest humility, and then thou givest all the blessings that are promised to the humble. Look upon our afflictions and misery—the low estate of thy people, and turn their captivity, we beseech thee. O make them more spiritual, and cause them to live more according to thy word. This is the worst wish we would wish them, even those that may have offended us, and we can wish them no better. We wish them to see things in the light of thy Spirit, and not to look on them after the outward appearance, but to judge righteous judgment, to value those that have thy righteousness upon them, and to value none beside, for without thee the most honourable are wretched, and with thee nothing ought to be despised.

## NOVEMBER 6.

*I have set the Lord always before me.*—PSALM xvi. 8.

To have Christ uppermost in our thoughts, is the perfection of Christianity: to love Christ—to live upon his blood and righteousness—to be continually feeding upon his word, and the promises which it contains. “For my flesh,” says the Saviour, “is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed,” that is, what he did and suffered in the flesh for us men and for our salvation. And again, “The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” In this sense it is highly desirable to set the Lord always before us, to have his word in our hearts and in our mouths, both for our consolation and that of others around us. “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” “And they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” We are not to keep the Lord’s goodness a secret, but to publish it abroad, “to speak of it to our children at our rising up and at our sitting down, and when we walk by the way.” When we are thus continually setting the Lord before us, we cannot well forget our benefits or be unmindful of his great mercies. And it is our wisdom to take every means to keep them in remembrance, seeing we are so apt to let them slip. Outward things have so many more attractions for our carnal natures that we cannot take too much pains in counteracting this tendency of our nature to outward things. “Set not your affections,” says the apostle, “on things on earth, but on things in heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.”

## NOVEMBER 7.

*Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him.—*  
JAMES ii. 5.

WHAT false estimates we form of people and things even in our best estate ! And when we are most spiritually-minded we cannot believe that the judgment of God is so very different from the opinion of the world, and that he takes so very different a measure of good and evil. "The things that are highly esteemed among men are abomination in the sight of God," and so again, "the things that are little esteemed among men, are often precious in the sight of God ;" "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," even of the most despised of his people, and yet how lightly are such things thought of in the world ! The death of a just man or of a minister of state, makes a great noise, but the death of a believer is regarded as a very mean thing, and yet the one is declared to be "precious in God's sight," and the other is as vanity. "For when the heart of man goeth forth, it is turned again to his dust, and in that very day his thoughts perish." Herein we see the distinguishing grace of God. Let our thoughts be as thy thoughts, O Lord.

## NOVEMBER 8.

*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.*—1 COR. ii. 10.

THE gift of the Spirit is the greatest gift in experience, as the gift of Christ was the crowning gift of salvation. He completed our salvation, and the Holy Spirit reveals and applies it. He makes known to us the things that are freely given to us of God; he enables us to believe them and to apprehend their reality, and he encourages us to ask them at a throne of grace, believing that we shall receive them; and thus he brings us into the full enjoyment of the things which pertain to believing, even "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." This joy is not a mere sensual joy, it is grounded on the word of God, and has for its object the work of Christ. We see that there is good cause for joy, our sins being forgiven and ourselves justified in the sight of God. It is not therefore an unreasonable joy, nor a mere sensation. It is a reasonable joy, yea the most reasonable that can be conceived—the joy of righteousness—which is the only true joy in the world, all other joy is nothing but as it partakes of this, and is sanctified by this, then it becomes real, and gladdens the heart. Lord, evermore grant us this joy.

## NOVEMBER 9.

*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.*

—ROMANS i. 17.

THE gospel is in truth a revelation of the righteousness of God. This is the subject of it. It “sets forth how God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” Herein it differs from all other religions or pretended revelations. They only discover what we ought to do; but the gospel sets forth this as already done,—a righteousness already wrought out,—a righteousness revealed from faith to faith,—every acting of faith leading to fresh discoveries of the excellency of this righteousness above all others, and thereby strengthening and encouraging the believer to fresh acts of faith in the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This is the genuine effect of believing in the righteousness of Christ. It begets such a relish for the subject, that it insensibly swallows up every other, and makes them appear as of small moment in the scale of spiritual importance. But this is the work of God the Holy Ghost. It is he that first begets faith in this righteousness, and it is he that alone increases it. Of him is our fruit found, and to him is due all the glory.

## NOVEMBER 10.

*Children are an heritage of the Lord : and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man ; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate—PSALM CXXVII. 3—5.*

WE ought to be thankful for all the gifts of God, but especially for those gifts which are specially his own. So far from repining at them as an evil, which modern philosophy would teach us to do, we ought to look upon them as singular tokens of God's favour towards us, and of his purposes of grace, and to receive them with all thankfulness, and a firm reliance on his blessing, both in the gift, and in the use of it ; for what can be more encouraging to us, than to think that God is bringing into the world another subject of his kingdom, a child of grace, and an heir of glory ; one who will sing the praises of God, and of the Lamb before the throne for ever and ever. Without this persuasion we cannot rejoice as we ought in such a benefit, and it behoves us to believe, without doubt or wavering, that such shall be the case, that God will take the children of believing parents into his special care and keeping, and that he will preserve them by his power through faith unto salvation.

## NOVEMBER 11.

*For so he giveth his beloved sleep.*—PSALM CXXVII. 2.

How little do we know the value of any blessing, till we are deprived of it, if not altogether, only for a season. One sleepless night is sufficient to convince us of the benefit of general rest. One day's anxiety is enough to give us a taste of the sweetness of general tranquillity. A little rod is sufficient to remind us of the gall and of the wormwood of just exercises, and we have cause to bless God, when we do feel our own miseries, that we do not feel them as in times past, and that we are not afflicted as in the days that are gone. To lie awake is a small exercise, compared with lying awake under the influence of cruel suggestions, and with weight of fearful imaginations on our spirits. But yet we are very apt to undervalue even our common immunities, freedom from general wakefulness, or the daily restlessness of an anxious disposition. We may not be harassed with temptations, and yet we may be overwhelmed with cares. We may not be tormented with visions in the night season, yet we may seek sleep in vain, and the more we covet it, the more it may fly from us. But "so he giveth his beloved rest." He first lets them feel that *it is* his gift, and then he gives it freely, and makes them thankful for it. "To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

## NOVEMBER 12.

*Put thou my tears into thy bottle.*—PSALM lvi. 8.

WE have not a grief, nor an uneasy sensation, but the Lord is privy to it, and takes account of it. If “the hairs of our head,” which are incapable of sensation, “are all numbered,” how much more are our sorrows, even the least that befall us. “The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous.” Well may we pray therefore, Lord, look upon us, take unto thine own view all that is within us, and exercise thy compassion upon us exactly as our necessities require. The Lord knoweth what we have need of, and if we do not receive what we think we have need of ourselves, it is because we really need it not. It is not because the Lord does not regard us, as we are but too apt to think at such times. No—it is because he knoweth better what we have need of, than we do ourselves. He knoweth also our frame; he remembereth that we are but as dust, and therefore it is that he takes such particular notice of our exercises, dealing them out in measure and by weight unto us. “He will not always chide, neither keepeth he his anger for ever.” “He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.” Let us therefore take consolation from this, that the Lord himself regardeth us, that his eye is ever upon us, that he takes notice of all that befalls us, that he puts all our “tears into his bottle,” and that he himself has undertaken for us, and will avenge us speedily. “Yea, though he bear long, yet will he avenge us speedily.”



## NOVEMBER 13.

*Thou shalt not be afraid for—the pestilence that walketh in darkness;  
nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.—PSALM xci. 6.*

THE promises of God are suited to all times and circumstances, nor can we be in any condition to which some promise does not apply. From pestilence and from public commotions we have the promise of protection, for he not only promises that he will keep us secretly in his tabernacle from the provoking of men, but that no evil shall happen to us, neither shall any plague come nigh our dwelling. It is the beauty of believing, that it affords a remedy for all the evils of life; and it was well said, that it is a great thing to live always believing, for we have always need of it, and perhaps never more than when we least see it. For we are at all times accompanied with dangers both to body and soul, and our best security consists in the sense of our danger, and a constant appeal from it to the protection of him, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, but keeps his eye continually upon us. “For his eye is over the righteous, and his ear is open to their prayers.” Lord, be thou pleased to take this nation under thy present protection; and if it be thy pleasure to afflict it for its sins, be pleased to look favourably on thy people, and to keep them in the day of the general calamity. In wrath, remember mercy; and for thine elect’s sake, let those days be shortened, we beseech thee.

## NOVEMBER 14.

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness :  
for they shall be filled.*—MATTHEW V. 6.

NEXT to the blessing of righteousness, which is the foundation of all others is, perhaps, the desire of it, arising, from a feeling sense of our own want of it, and that we are by nature without righteousness. And surely this sense is never given without being satisfied, so that we may reckon as certainly upon the revelation of righteousness from such a hunger and thirst after it, as upon the rising of the sun from the convenient darkness, which is always said to be most intense immediately before the sun rising. And so our appetite for righteousness increases as we approach the gratification of it, and are nearer the full enjoyment of our desires. Lord, I believe thou hast given us to desire above all things, that thy kingdom of righteousness may be established in our hearts, and to look after this as the foundation of all our other blessings and benefits ; and having given us this desire, I cannot doubt that it is thy will we should be satisfied ; for thou hast said, “ Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they *shall* be filled.” Lord, grant unto thy servants a perfect satisfaction in this respect ; suffer not our cravings to abate till they are abated by thee, but keep us ever reaching after it, that we may apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of God.

## NOVEMBER 15.

*Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—*  
 LUKE xii. 15.

IF we did but take notice how many of our vexations arise out of pecuniary circumstances, we should see the value of that exhortation, to “take heed, and beware of covetousness.” When this evil, however, is discovered and pardoned, as all sin is, which we feel and confess, there is good ground to hope that it will be subdued also, so that sin may not have dominion over us, “as we are not under the law, but under grace.” It is surprising under what different pretexts we give admission to this evil; others have dealt subtly with us, and therefore we must not be too soft with them. But we are commanded to do unto others, not as they have done unto us, but as we would that they should do unto us. The conduct of others, is no excuse for our misconduct; but we ought ever so to conduct ourselves as in the sight of God, depending on his providence to bring all to a prosperous issue. For the Lord indeed is able to make up all our losses, though, indeed, as appears by many instances in the New Testament, Christ took very little account of outward blessings, but was ever directing the attention of his disciples to higher objects, even to that one thing needful—his kingdom of righteousness in their hearts. Lord, evermore grant us to seek this in the first place, knowing that all other things shall be added, and feeling that due degree of indifference about them, which is becoming professors of thy most holy faith.

## NOVEMBER 16.

*Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.—JOHN vii. 37.*

WHAT a blessed invitation! how full and free! Here are no limitations or conditions, beyond that of feeling our wants. "If any man thirst." Thirst is an uneasy sensation; and in its excess even more so than hunger perhaps; but the degree of thirst is not specified, further than such a thirst as should induce the person feeling it to come. "And blessed are they who so hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Whoever so feels his wants of righteousness, as to be willing to come to Christ for it, shall be filled, shall be satisfied, as it is written in the book of the Psalms. "When I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it;" yea, Lord, and when we feel that we are righteous, even as thou art righteous, and holy as thou art holy, then and not till then, are we satisfied. A truly enlightened conscience will rest in nothing short of the righteousness of Christ; and having found that, it is as one who hath found great spoils, or who, having discovered a treasure hid in a field, straightway goeth his ways, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. It so far exceeds, and transcends all other considerations, that he is no longer anxious about any other righteousness to recommend him to God, nor does he doubt but that he shall stand accepted therein. Thus is way made for the full and free communications of the Spirit of Christ, which is indeed the ministration of righteousness that exceedeth in glory, and thus is there in us as "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

## NOVEMBER 17.

*O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.—PSALM cvii. 1, 2.*

WHAT numberless matters of thankfulness have we in our every-day mercies, in being preserved ourselves, and ours, in health of body and soundness of mind, in being provided from day to day with all things pertaining to life and godliness, but above all, in having a thankful sense of our mercies, which is the crown of them all. And even in the absence of any particular temporal mercies, though such an absence can hardly occur, when we have eyes to see them, still there are always the blessings of redemption to record. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed out of the hand of the enemy." What a mercy is this, to be redeemed out of the hand of the devil, and to "be delivered from the fear of death," more particularly at this day, when death seems threatening in so many different shapes. To be in the ark, safe from the power of the destroyer, yea to be in such circumstances that death itself would be a gain, is surely an unspeakable mercy, and ought to be acknowledged in all our approaches to the throne of grace among our special benefits. Lord Jesus, whatever thou givest us (and thy gifts have been great and many) give us, we beseech thee, an increasing sense of thy goodness, and multiply unto us this grace of thankfulness for benefits received, that we may indeed be of those, who by prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving*, may always make our suit unto thee for mercies to come.

## NOVEMBER 18.

*Out of weakness were made strong.*—HEBREWS xi. 34.

WE may greatly judge from our preceding experience, what the Lord is going to do for us. He works by contraries, he lets us feel the want of that thing he is going to bestow; when he is going to put forth his power, he lets us feel our sensible weakness; when he is going to manifest his righteousness he lets us feel our own guilt and sinfulness, that is, he allows the enemy to work upon our corruptions, and legal nature to disturb us, for the right conviction of sin comes with the discovering of righteousness, as the real discovery of our own helplessness is made best in communications of divine grace. The one illustrates the other, but while we are under the feeling, either of guilt or weakness absolutely, we only contend against it. We are never nearer relief, however, than when we feel our own sorrowful estate by nature, and how absolutely impossible it is to relieve ourselves out of it. Indeed there is generally a point of time just before our deliverance out of any oppressive state of mind, when we are ready to give all up in despair, and to think it impossible we can ever obtain permanent relief. Then it is that God breaks in upon our souls with the light of his divine Spirit, and makes known to us the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, even "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

## NOVEMBER 19.

*These all died in faith.*—HEBREWS xi. 13.

THERE is no stronger proof of the doctrine of forgiveness of sins than the death of believers. Whatever they have been engaged in, or whatever frame of mind they may have been in immediately before, yet when they come to die, how wonderfully are they supported in the most appalling circumstances. This was eminently the case with some of the Scottish covenanters, although they were engaged in rash rebellions that could not be justified, and probably much injured at the time, yet in the hour of death, how wonderfully were they supported, nay carried beyond themselves, and died in the transports of joy, and in the fullest triumphs of faith. O that I might die the death of the righteous, and that my latter end might be like his. Blessed be God for a better confidence than was his who uttered these words, even a confidence founded on that blood and righteousness, whereby all that ever died in faith were supported, and on which, whosoever depends, cannot fail of experiencing the same support in his dying hours. For Jesus hath said, "that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." In the faith of this resurrection therefore, we may quietly "lay ourselves down and take our rest, for thou, Lord, sustainest us." "When we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we need fear no evil, for thy rod and thy staff they comfort us."



## NOVEMBER 20.

*They wearied themselves to find the door.*—GENESIS xix. 11.

WHAT an awful proof of the desperate depravity of the human heart is here exhibited in the people of Sodom. Though they were struck blind by an immediate judgment from God, yet they still wearied themselves to find Lot's door. Well might our Saviour declare, "Though one rose from the dead, yet will they not believe." No judgments will convince ungodly man of his ungodliness. 'Tis the Spirit alone that can convince us of sin, and bring us to the feet of the Saviour, that we may obtain remission thereof. And blessed is the man who is so convinced, yea, "blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." But he *will* impute it to all who obstinately deny it, and grope about at the door of self-righteousness to find some other way to heaven than that one appointed way, which is Jesus Christ. How many judgments fall upon men to convince them of this error, and yet how do they persist in seeking admission by any other door rather than the right one, bent, like those men of Sodom on their own destruction. It is easy to blame others and overlook our own errors; but let us all consider wherein we resist the admonitions of the Spirit, and persist to our own hurt, in things that cannot profit, yea in things that necessarily lead to destruction. "Open thou our eyes, O Lord, that we may see wondrous things out of thy law."



## NOVEMBER 21.

*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.—JOHN i. 12.*

O LORD, we beseech thee grant us this power, for thou art he that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost, and it is by thy Spirit only that we can call thee “our Father, for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” Blessed be thy name, however, that thou hast enabled us to call upon thy name, and we believe that thou wilt not withhold this loving-kindness from us, that we shall still be enabled so to do. For whom thou lovest, thou lovest unto the end; and we may say with the Apostle, “behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be made like unto him. Every man therefore that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” And we would purify ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. We would give up ourselves to be taught of thee, neither to love the world nor the things that are in the world, “for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Lord, undertake for us, and teach us, and if in anything we are otherwise minded than we ought to be, reveal even this unto us.

## NOVEMBER 22.

*How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?—*

JOHN vii. 15.

IT is wonderful, how God provides for the necessities of his people, whether of body or mind, when they trust in him. He gives them such knowledge and such means of serving him, when they are set upon his service, as they had no other means of attaining. The truth is, that we are much too limited in our exercises of dependence on his providence; we do not trust him half so far as we are warranted in doing; we do not believe his word half so explicitly, nor to so great an extent as we are encouraged, nay, commanded to believe it. For the command runs thus. ‘Have faith in God,’ but instead of that, we put trust in our own contrivances; and when we are at a stand in these, we think that all is over with us, whereas it is the very beginning of a right confidence. For the Lord has promised to judge his people, and to repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their strength is all gone, and none shut up or left. And so with our wisdom and learning also. When that fails us, and when we feel that God hath indeed made foolish the wisdom of this world, then it is that he vouchsafes his divine instruction, according to that blessed thanksgiving of our Lord. “Father, I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

## NOVEMBER 23.

*Thy gentleness hath made me great.*—PSALM XVIII. 35.

THE goodness of God leadeth us to repentance, and his gentleness makes us great; not great as the world considers greatness, but great in the favour of the Lord. “He that is least among you, the same shall be the greatest.” And nothing makes us so little in our own eye, as the gentleness of the Lord, and his gracious dealings with us. These melt the heart when nothing else will make an impression. They make us feel our own unworthiness in a much more sensible manner, than all the sufferings we meet with. They make us open to conviction—willing to see ourselves such as we really are, and willing to give God all the glory of all the grace bestowed upon us. It has a marvellous effect in softening the heart, to see the goodness of the Lord, which endureth yet daily. It feeds our faith also, and strengthens our hope for the future, and thus it exalts us in the apprehension of his faithfulness and truth. For by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of our spirits, not in outward sufferings, but in the inward consolations. God deals gently with his people; he gently leadeth those that are great with young,—those that are in any trouble, and his gentleness raises them out of it.

## NOVEMBER 24.

*And thou shalt be a blessing.*—GENESIS xii. 2.

THIS was spoken of Abraham, and in him of Christ. Out of his loins was He to proceed, in whom all nations should be blessed. But it was spoken secondarily of Abraham himself. He was made a blessing to the country to which he was removed, even to that country which God showed him of; and there is no doubt that God either blesses a country for the sake of the believers that dwell in it, or he removes them out of it. And woe unto that country from which God removes his people. It is under an anathema. His ban is upon it. “Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.” Well may believers therefore leave their case in the Lord’s hands. He is their confidence, he is their shield and their exceeding great reward: he goes before them, and his glory is their rereward. For God is not less glorified in the display of his justice, than of his mercy. “What if God, willing to display his power, (saith the apostle) on the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.” But his glory shines principally in the face of Jesus Christ, as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, and in these characters it is, that the glorious ends of his people’s removal are chiefly displayed, to manifest his grace, and make known his salvation.

## NOVEMBER 25.

*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.—PSALM xxiii. 6.*

THIS may apply in the first place to our glorification in heaven. “I go, saith our Lord, to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also.” But it also applies to the privilege of meeting the people of God in the house of prayer, and joining them in the praise of the Lamb here upon earth. This is not a benefit we can command of ourselves; we may go indeed to a place of worship, but we must go with a blessing and under a special direction to benefit thereby. “The Lord goeth before his people, and leadeth them in the way wherein they should go.” He prepares a place for them, not only in heaven, but upon earth. Abraham went into the place that God showed him of, not a place of his own seeking, or one of his own contriving, richly watered, or abundant in pastures, but one which God had before fixed upon, as the place of his inheritance and of his residence. “The Lord went before him, and the glory of the Lord was his rereward.” And then he dwelt in the house of the Lord for ever. He had a permanent place of settlement and of worship. The Lord was with him, and sanctified it to him. And shall we distrust that he will do the same for us? No, by no means. We too shall find a resting-place, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts.

## NOVEMBER 26.

*Love as brethren.*—1 PETER iii. 8.

IT has been our prayer for some time, that the Lord would be pleased to open our hearts and our hands, and it now seems as if we had a prospect of the fulfilment of this petition. It seems as if an opening were made for the communion of saints, as well as for the more liberal distribution of such benefits as the Lord has bestowed upon us. Nor is there a more blessed life than this, of communion and communication. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The receiver only gets an outward benefit, but the giver a spiritual blessing; and how great a blessing those only can know, to whom it is given. For a liberal heart is the Lord's gift, and not only so, but the opportunity of doing good is his gift also. We can no more create the opportunity, than we can "create a clean heart within us," and it is certain, that unless our hearts be purged from dead works, we can never acceptably serve the living God. Works of charity are dead, unless they are done in the faith of Jesus Christ. "But a cup of cold water given in his name, is an acceptable service." Bless the Lord, O my soul, for the prospect of administering to the wants of thy people; and as there is now a willing mind, do thou grant also that there may be a performance of those things which we purpose.

## NOVEMBER 27.

*And lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.—*

MATTHEW xxviii, 20.

How valuable is this promise to us “upon whom the ends of the world are come,” for though it may apply more particularly to ministers, and to such as are especially engaged in the work of the Lord, yet it is not without an applicancy to the people of God generally, with whom Christ has promised to be present as long as the world shall last, to comfort and support them under all their crosses, and to enable them to endure unto the end, that they may be saved. Nor was there ever a time when there was more need for his presence than the present, when the world is turned up side down, and when the heels have got into the place of the head. Yet the Lord reigneth, and his kingdom is over all, and more particularly he reigneth in the hearts of his people, to keep them from running after the error of the wicked in these turbulent times; for though they may be overtaken for a season, if need be, to show them the deceitfulness of their own hearts, yet it is only to purify and to purge them, and to make them white, until the time of the end shall come, when Jesus “shall have delivered up the kingdom unto the Father,” and God shall be all in all. Let us, therefore, “as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if any thing, we be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto us.”

## NOVEMBER 28.

*Jehovah-jireh—or—the Lord will provide.—GENESIS xxii. 14.*

THERE is nothing more certain than that the Lord provides for his people whatever they require, and whatever they ask of him; nay, that he provides many things for us, even before we ask; according to that—"Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Whether we want, therefore, a master or a servant, a tenant or a landlord, we are authorized to trust in him, and it is blessed exercise of faith to be recording daily his benefits toward us in these particulars. "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day." While we are taking no steps ourselves, the Lord provides for such as he approves. He performs all things for us. Let us learn, therefore, to look more unto him, and less to our own foresight and wisdom, to trust more to his providence, and less to our own ease and circumspection, and while we do the best we can in our affairs, remember that it is the blessing of the Lord *only* which maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow therewith. To see the hand of the Lord in little and great, to set the Lord always before us, is indeed the perfection of the life of faith, so far as regards temporal things, nor less in spiritual.



## NOVEMBER 29.

*And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee : go, and sin no more.—JOHN viii. 11.*

It appears that the woman was taken in the very act, and yet our Saviour acquits her, not because she was not guilty, but because her sins were forgiven, and they were forgiven not as an encouragement to sin again, but rather as an encouragement not to sin any more. “Go and sin no more.” Thus “sin shall not have dominion over us, because we are not under the law, but under grace.” The way to subdue sin is to seek for forgiveness in the first place, and with respect to this as to many other things, it may truly be said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” seek for a sense of justification, “and all these things”—a subjugation of sin and a victory over your corruptions—shall follow. Lord, evermore grant us this assurance, even a full assurance of understanding, an assurance grounded on a right understanding of the doctrines of grace, as revealed in the scriptures, and applied by the Spirit—that thus being acquitted in our own consciences, we may contend with sin upon clear grounds, and fight with it in the full assurance of victory over it. For “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,” and not the world only, but sin of all kinds. It is by faith alone that we contend with it, and war a good warfare, and through faith we may not only subdue kingdoms, but what is more, may subdue our own lusts, and the kingdom of Satan within us.

## NOVEMBER 30.

*Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.—PSALM xxx. 11.*

THERE is generally a season of heaviness, or at least of exercise, preceding a season of enlargement. "The Lord bringeth down to the grave and lifteth up, he woundeth, and his hands make whole." He lets us feel in a measure what we are and what we deserve, before he discovers to us the riches of his grace, and enables us to lay hold of his finished salvation. It is then grateful to us, as refreshing as rain upon the mown grass, or as the dew upon the herbs. It does us real good. It refreshes our spirits, and comes with double relish from coming after a season of exercise, if not of temptation—though in scripture all exercises are called temptations, as it is written, "Blessed is the man that falleth into divers temptations," that is, different exercises of his faith, "for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to all them that love him." It were an exceedingly desirable thing in all our exercises, to look forward assuredly to the end of them, and to believe, that we shall as certainly have "the oil of joy," as we experience the mourning; and "the garment of praise," as we are oppressed with the "spirit of heaviness." "Joy cometh in the morning." Not the renewed light of each morning is more certain than returning joy is to the mourning believer. "He that goeth on his way weeping, and bearing precious seed, shall doubtless return with joy, bringing his sheaves with him."

## DECEMBER 1.

*Be not faithless, but believing.*—JOHN XX. 27.

WHAT a reproach is it to a Christian people, to be so afraid of the infection of disease, while they are so totally indifferent about the pollution of sin. They think nothing of exposing themselves to the contamination of a wicked world, but are extremely careful to keep out of the way of an epidemic disease. Whereas there is much better security to a believer against the one than the other, for he may meet the one in a way of believing, but no one can run into the way of the world by any just warrant of faith. For the word of faith commands us to come out of the world, and that same word has assured us, that we shall tread upon serpents and scorpions, and if we drink any deadly thing, even it shall not hurt us. So that we may go boldly in the way of outward danger at the call of duty, but we cannot go safely in the way of spiritual danger against that sense of duty. Nevertheless we are much more afraid of the one sort of danger than the other. Whereas there is no sort of comparison betwixt them, either in the strength of security, or in the degree of risk; the one being only a danger to our health, and the other to our peace; the one being only a natural, while the other is a spiritual danger; the one temporal, while the other relates to the things of eternity.

## DECEMBER 2.

*Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the  
God of our salvation.—PSALM lxxviii. 19.*

BLESSED be God for the mercies of this day; for a favourable report of affairs at home; and for a renewed sense of our mercies in all the dispensations of providence toward us; in preserving us from the evils already in existence, and in abating the progress of others; in keeping our minds happy and contented, as well as our bodies free from disease, when others have been afflicted both in body and mind. How little do we know of our many infirmities, while we are sometimes repining at little vexations, and how thankful ought we to be to him, who does not withdraw his loving-kindness from us, because we are not sensible of it. Nothing proves the pardon of sin more completely, even of such sins as are not known to ourselves, than that we are not visited for our ingratitude with such evils as we do not apprehend, though they may be near to very many of us. But as we are cleansed from undiscovered sins, so are we protected also from evils unknown, “from the arrow that flieth by day, and from the pestilence that walketh in darkness.” Whatever thou givest us, either of immunity or of enjoyment, Lord, grant us a thankful spirit for our own benefit, seeing that there is nothing which contributes so much to our happiness, as acknowledging thy mercies, and nothing wherein our interests and our pleasures are more nearly united, than in a happy and contented frame of mind at all times, and under all circumstances.

## DECEMBER 3.

*The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save : neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.—ISAIAH lix. 1.*

No, but “our iniquities have separated betwixt us and our God,” and above all the iniquities of unbelief, of which man makes least account, and God the most of all the sins, of which we can be guilty, for it is that which effectually causeth the separation. Without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh unto God, must not only believe in his existence, but must believe in his willingness to be reconciled to us in the Son of his love. Otherwise there can be no true repentance, nothing but a feigned submission. It is faith which makes all the difference. The heart is purified by faith, and all actions of our lives must be purified in the same way to be acceptable unto God. It is only by virtue of the blood and righteousness of a crucified Redeemer, that we can hope for acceptance either for ourselves or our services, whatever they be. And when we approach God by this “new and living way,” then we shall find indeed, that “his hand is not shortened, nor his ear heavy, but that his eye is ever upon us, and his ears open unto our prayers.” For this is the confidence, that “if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us, and if we know that he hear us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” Lord, grant thy people peace, peace by the blood of the cross, and access unto thee, on behalf of a backsliding and rebellious nation.

## DECEMBER 4.

*Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.—2 CORINTHIANS xii. 9.*

· NOTHING makes way for communion so much as the feeling of our own infirmities, and self-emptiness, and of our utter dependence on Christ. For as we have no stock of grace in ourselves, so is there nothing which hinders the communication of that grace from without, so much as an opinion of our having it of our own. For this reason we are sometimes left to feel our infirmities, and are apt foolishly to fret at them, not considering that they are our best instructors to bring us to Christ. All the persons that came to Christ in the days of his flesh were persons labouring under some bodily *infirmity*, either of hearing, or sight, or something of that kind, and no doubt they found their infirmities blessed monitors to bring them to him, and the appointed means in the hands of providence, to make them acquainted with him. Let us not therefore, repine at our weakness, but rather glory in it, “that the power of Christ may rest upon us,” and that we may have a more visible display of his healing mercy. For “whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,” and even those of his people who are most grievously afflicted, are neither afflicted for their own sins, nor those of their forefathers, but that God may be glorified in them.

## DECEMBER 5.

*If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.—*

ISAIAH vii. 9.

WE are often called upon to sing the song of triumph, ere the victory is attained, or at least ere it is fulfilled in our experience, to believe more than we yet feel of our triumph in Christ. He is our victory over all sin and sorrow; therefore he says, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome." He encourages us to rejoice in his victory, as a sure presage of our own, even before we experience the blessed effects of it in our own persons. And surely it is good ground of rejoicing, and a safe ground of exultation, more safe than anything we can experience of ourselves, for it rests upon a foundation that cannot be moved, even Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And thus it is that shouting victory in Christ, and giving thanks for the benefit, even before we receive it, we put honour upon God's word and faithfulness, and eventually reap a more abundant harvest of joy, than those that rest too much upon it. To be content without a thing, is the way to enjoy it; and to be thankful for it beforehand, is the way to secure it. God will always put honour on our acts of simple dependence on him; he is always well pleased with our unlimited confidence in him, because such confidence must be grounded on Christ the corner-stone. It can have no other foundation. It would be a preposterous faith, which anticipated joy on any other ground. But thus it puts honour on God, and he will put honour on it.

## DECEMBER 6.

*Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.—MARK xi. 22.*

As this is our wisdom, so is it also our happiness. For how happy we should be, if we believed God according to the largeness of his promises, no one can tell. But small faith brings in small revenues. Nevertheless God does more for us than we deserve; yea, he does for us in spite of our undeservings. What an ample promise is that, "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." If we did but believe this with half the credit which it deserves, what an ample inheritance would it prove. "He that has all power in heaven and in earth, to bestow all blessings upon us, of whatsoever kind or degree, stands engaged to give us whatever we ask." The warrant runs thus, "Ask; and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh, receiveth, and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened," even all the wealth of Christ's mediatorial kingdom, and all the treasures of grace. Let us therefore come boldly to a throne of grace, and let us ask largely for us and ours; Lord, we do ask of thee, that we may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and may be filled with all the fulness of God. We cannot ask more, and we would not ask less.



## DECEMBER 7.

*Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's ; and unto God the things that are God's.—MATTHEW xxiii. 21.*

FROM this Christians may learn not to disturb themselves about evil abuses, for after all they amount only to the matter of wrong, which being an arbitrary enactment of the civil power, and as it were, a creature of government, is under its immediate control, and whether well or ill employed, is a matter of little consequence to a Christian. How many vexations would believers save themselves, and how much unnecessary trouble, if they could but be content to let politics alone, and leave Cæsar to manage Cæsar's concerns. Our principal business is to see that our own hearts are right towards God, to seek his kingdom and righteousness, and to render to him that entire homage of our hearts and affections, which is his due. He requires all our hearts, and he alone can enable us to give them, by convincing us that his whole heart is set upon us to do us good. " We love God, because he first loved us, and the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if Christ died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for them, that they which henceforth live, should not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them."

## DECEMBER 8.

*Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.*  
MATTHEW xxvi. 74.

WHO would think that this was the same Peter, who before the whole council of Jews a little time afterwards, said, "whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you, rather than God, judge ye!" But these things are written for our instruction, to show us the frailty of man, and the power of God, and preach to us sensibly, that as without Christ we can do nothing but evil, (which by this example it appears we can do readily enough,) "so we can do all things through Christ strengthening us." He that was afraid of a maid, was not afraid of the assembled elders, and of the whole synagogue of the Jews. We ought also to learn hence, to what lengths believers may be permitted to go; for it seems that Peter was not content with denying Christ, but began to curse and to swear, as if he would show by his conduct, as well as by his declaration, that he was none of his. How charitable ought this to make us in our judgments of others, and how distrustful of ourselves. How many of us indeed, if we were told beforehand what we should do, would be apt to exclaim, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" and it seems Peter himself was of this way of thinking, for he all but swore when he was told by our Saviour, that he should deny him. "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." And yet this same Peter denied him, not only in words, but in works.

## DECEMBER 9.

*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings : his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.—PSALM cxii. 7.*

IT becomes us all to live above and beyond outward circumstances as much as possible, but there is nothing but a confidence in God, founded on the belief of his being at peace with us in Christ, that can keep our hearts quiet in time of evil. It is this alone which can secure us against real evil, even that "blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel," and it is this alone which can reconcile us to the appearances of evil, inasmuch as it convinces us that they are only appearances, and intended only for good. Many things befall believers as well as others, which wear an evil appearance, though there is, no doubt, a particular providence exercised toward them, even to protect them from such; nor is there a question that we may exercise a dependence for our immunities, as well as for our positive enjoyments. Nevertheless this covers all, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin, and being cleansed from all sin, we are exempted from all suffering, but such as is necessary to bring us to our recollection. If we are in heaviness, it is because there is a *needs-be* for our own good.

## DECEMBER 10.

*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.—ISAIAH XXVI. 3.*

THIS is an old promise, and one that I remember of old. It is in exact accordance too, with the New Testament promise, that “the peace of God shall keep our hearts always through Christ Jesus.” And the same cause is assigned in both cases, namely, trusting on God, or as it is expressed in the New Testament, “by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, letting our requests be made known unto God.” This is coupled too, with “being careful for nothing,” and truly when we consider how much our peace is subject to be interrupted by the cares and concerns of this world, we shall see the propriety of the exhortation, and the justness of the connection between the absence of care, the continual recourse to thanksgiving and prayer, and the maintenance of perfect peace within. These three live and die together—that is, a spiritual unconcern, devotion to prayer, and a sense of peace with God; nor can we be otherwise than thankful while these prevail, because they not only afford continual matter of thankfulness in themselves, but proceed from the same spirit of peace which thankfulness does. The Holy Ghost is the author of all right feelings. “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but it is he which worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

## DECEMBER 11.

*Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief.*—MARK ix. 24.

How shall any one know that he believes? There is no better test than the sense of unbelief. He that never felt his own weakness, can scarcely apprehend God's power, because it is "out of weakness that we are made strong," and it is out of unbelief that we are brought to the apprehension of Christ. "He shall convince the world of sin, that they believe not on me," and when we are convinced of this, it is only that we may afterwards be convinced of righteousness, and of judgment—of righteousness by the ascension of Christ, and his acting in heaven for us, and of judgment by the victory which he hath obtained over Satan and all his works. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus it is through a course of weakness and strength, and of dying and living, that we are brought to live indeed according to that saying of our Lord's, "That whosoever believeth on me, though he were dead (that is, to all sense) yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die." Lord, grant us this faith, that we may know indeed that we believe, by the life-giving effects.

## DECEMBER 12.

*The preparations of the heart in man are of the Lord.—*

PROVERBS xvi. 1.

WHAT a mercy it is in all the dispensations of providence, that he who has the management of them, has also our hearts in his hands, and prepares them beforehand according to the dispensations which he is about to bring to pass by his providence. When he is going to bring evil on the land, he gives his people warning to be on their watch-tower, and he humbles them beforehand, that they may wait upon him for the discovery of his will. Thus in the case of Abraham, he let him know his intentions upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and he delivered righteous Lot, who “with continual seeing and hearing, daily vexed his soul.” And will he not even, unto this day, declare his purposes unto his servants. Most certainly he will, and by making them sensible of their own corruptions, and of their own shame in causing the calamity, he will bring them to a proper frame for humbling themselves before him, and interceding for others. For though in ourselves we deserve nothing, yet as in Christ, and covered with his robe of righteousness, we may go boldly to a throne of grace, and plead with the Lord on behalf of a sinful people, praying him that they may be brought to a sense of their sins, and that the plague may be stayed among them.

## DECEMBER 13.

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.—PSALM xci. 1.*

WHAT a blessing it is in all our extremities to have a God to go to, who is as it were, "a refuge from the storm, and a covert from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." It is a peculiar excellence of this refuge that it is always open; the gates of this city of refuge are never shut, nor are they ever closed against us for any unworthiness on our part. Yea, though we have been going on in a course of provocation, yet immediately we turn to the Lord, he is ready to receive us, and not like human helps, continually taking affront, and then most difficult of access, when we stand most in need of their assistance. No, He is a *present* help in every time of trouble, and however we may have forgotten him in our prosperity, as we are all but too apt to do, yet no sooner do we turn to him in our troubles, and with full purpose of heart, then he repents him of the evil, and turns again to us. Nay more, it is by his turning unto us, and renewing a right spirit within us, that we are first inclined to return unto him. He *prevents* us with the blessings of his goodness, and puts words into our mouths. He pours out upon us the spirit of grace and of supplication, and says unto us "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, for I am the Lord that hath mercy on you."

## DECEMBER 14.

*My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.—*

EXODUS xxxiii. 14.

THIS is a counterpart of that promise of our Saviour—"My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," and again, "Behold, I am with you even unto the end of the world." Christ has promised to be with his people, and it is his presence that separates them from all people that are on the face of the earth, and this separates them effectually, because they feel that communion with the world is incompatible with that peace which he gives, and which the world can neither give nor take away. It is true that it may try and does try very often to disturb it, but in vain. For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith; and though in the world we may have tribulation, yet this only confirms our peace, because it drives us to Christ, and compels us to depend more entirely on him. Well may we then be of good cheer, since he has overcome the world in his own person, and has promised us that he will overcome it in ours. Making us more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. In this confidence we go forward conquering and to conquer, because the presence of the Lord goes along with us, and gives us peace notwithstanding all the disturbances of the world, yea, a peace which passeth all understanding, while we are continually engaged in committing ourselves and all our concerns into the hands of the Lord, and by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, letting our requests be made known unto him.



## DECEMBER 15.

*When I said, my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.—*

PSALM xciv. 18.

How many times has this been the case with every believer. When he hath said and felt too, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death;" a view of God's mercy in Christ has enabled him to add, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," or as it may be understood, "The grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." There are times when we feel our infirmities more particularly, and that too often in the midst of manifestations of divine favour, to illustrate, as it were, our own insufficiency, and to convince us if need be, that "in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" but though to will be present with us, a desire to do good, yet how to perform we find not, but on the contrary, continual shortenings and backslidings. Thus it is that God proves us and humbles us by shewing us what are in our hearts, and that man in his best estate is altogether vanity. Yea when we seem in the best possible frame, it is sometimes overset by the most trifling accident. And we feel that we are not one whit the better in ourselves for all the Lord hath done for us. But blessed be God for a remedy even for this. "Yet will I look again, saith the prophet, toward thy holy temple." One look toward Christ restores all, and brings health again into our limbs, and soundness into our bones. "Look unto me and be ye saved, saith the Lord." To look upon him is the effect of his looking upon us, and when he looks upon us, it is with an eye of pity and compassion, that carries health and a cure along with it.

## DECEMBER 16.

*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.—LUKE v. 8.*

THIS is the same Peter who said, "Lord, to whom shall we go, for thou hast the words of eternal life." And to whom indeed should a sinner go, but to him "who is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him." How often, under a feeling of our own sinfulness, do we also fall into Peter's mistake and say, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Whereas this is the very reason why we should cleave the closer to him, who is the only propitiation for our sins, and whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Our Lord himself answers the objection in the same chapter, when he tells us that he "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Nevertheless there is so strong a bias of self-righteousness in us, that we can hardly believe that we can come unto Christ, or that he will come unto us, until we have made ourselves worthy of him. Most unworthy thought of him who is worthiness itself, and who brings all to us, but receives nothing from us, our gratitude even containing our benefits, and being a gift of his grace. For as no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, so can no man praise him aright but by the Spirit of grace and of supplications. How great is our debt therefore, and how infinitely beyond our own ability to pay. Let us lay aside therefore all thoughts of our own worthiness or unworthiness, and let us come unto Christ at his own bidding, as unworthy sinners to an all-sufficient Saviour.

## DECEMBER 17.

*But by an equality : that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want.—2 CORINTHIANS viii. 14.*

THERE is this equality between the poor and the rich, that as the one abound more in temporals, so the other generally in spirituals, “Hath not God chosen the poor rich in faith.” If therefore the rich contribute to the temporal relief of the poor, they receive much more in return, by the prayers of the poor for their spiritual welfare. It is the best return that can be made us. And if we reap of their spirituals, it is a small thing indeed that they should partake of our temporals. Lord, incline our hearts to a liberal distribution of such things as we possess, that as there is first a willing mind, so there may also be a performance on our parts of the things which we purpose; and that this glory may redound to God in many thanksgivings, and much benefit both to the giver and receiver. It is surely more blessed to give than to receive; and the rich in this respect have the best of the exchange; but there is also a blessing in praying for blessings on others, and he that so watereth shall be watered himself. He shall experience the benefit of being interested for others. His love shall be made to abound, and where love abounds, *fear* will abate, for perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment.

## DECEMBER 18.

*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.—*

2 CORINTHIANS ix. 15.

“IF thou knewest the gift of God,” said our Saviour, “and who it was that said unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” Now this he spake of the Spirit which they who believe on him should receive. And undoubtedly the gift of the Spirit is the greatest gift of all in experience, inasmuch as it is the Spirit that makes known to us all other things that are freely given unto us of God, because they are revealed unto us by his Spirit. But the gift spoken of by the Apostle, I apprehend to mean the gift of Christ himself, of whom it is written in another place, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” The gift of Christ is thus made the foundation of all other gifts, even the gift of the Spirit himself. “For to as many as believed on him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, and this he did by the gift of his Spirit.” Well may the Apostle therefore exclaim, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift, unspeakable in itself, and unspeakable in its consequences, entailing all that is good in heaven and on earth, even a free grant of all covenant blessings in time and in eternity, a conveyance of all good, temporal, spiritual, and eternal—“an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”

## DECEMBER 19.

*For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.*—2 CORINTHIANS X. 18.

IF every man's commendations of himself were to be taken for his real character, we should none of us want a recommendation; but he that judgeth us is the Lord, and he seeth not as man seeth, for when we think best of ourselves, we are often in least esteem with God, or at least he manifests his favour to us least; and when again we are most out of conceit with ourselves, (so as it does not lead to dejection of spirit,) we experience most of the loving-kindness of our heavenly Father. He filleth the hungry with good things, while he sendeth the rich empty away. "Jesus said, For judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." John ix. 39. Thus we are never nearer righteousness than when we feel our own unrighteousness. "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." And never nearer an acquittal than when self-condemned. "God be merciful to me a sinner," was the prelude to going down to his house justified. "For he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

## DECEMBER 20.

*Who remembereth us in our low estate.*—PSALM CXXXVI. 23.

How many times have we had occasion to verify this Scripture. Indeed I believe we never *feel* ourselves to be in a low estate, but the Lord grants us relief. He remembereth the poor and needy, and such as forget him shall not be able to exalt themselves. When we feel ourselves as nothing, then Christ is all in all unto us, and when we are lowest in our own esteem, he rises in our estimation. He that walketh humbly, walketh securely, and the Lord himself stands engaged to show himself strong on the behalf of all those that put their trust in him. Well may we then say, “If God be for us, who can be against us. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” Yea the Lord himself will be our helper, and more especially so when we have no other. The more simply we trust in him, the more assuredly we shall experience relief at his hands. And though men rise up against us, yet will we not be afraid. For he lifteth up the poor out of the dust, to set him with the princes, even with the princes of his people. He will see that such as are in need have right.

## DECEMBER 21.

*I will both lay me down in peace and sleep ; for thou, Lord, only  
makest me dwell in safety.*—PSALM iv. 8.

How many dangers by day and by night does God protect us from. How many that are visible, and how many more that we do not see, and have no conception of. He protects us not only from wicked men, but from evil spirits who are continually going about, as well as their evil master, "seeking whom they *may* devour." But, blessed be God, they *may* not devour any of his people; He says, "None shall pluck them out of my hand," nor shall any one hurt them, "I, the Lord, do keep them night and day," and if we would but be careful to record all the instances of Divine Providence towards us, we should find there is hardly a day in which we do not experience some instance of his protection—in which we may not bless him for deliverance from some danger, spiritual or temporal. "Lead us not into temptation," we pray, "but deliver us from the evil." And surely it is of God both to prevent the danger and to deliver us from it, when permitted. "He keepeth all our bones, so that not one of them is broken," and he also preserveth our spirits from the assaults of Satan.

## DECEMBER 22.

*For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God.—2 Cor. xiii. 4.*

WHAT a consolation is it to all suffering Christians that Christ also hath suffered in the flesh, and that having been “tempted in all points like as we, he is able also to succour all them that are tempted,” or that are in any trouble. He can be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” having been subject to the like infirmities himself, yet without sin. He was crucified through weakness; he felt all the weakness of nature in the endurance of death. His human nature shrank as ours does from the suffering of death; he was made in all points like as we are, and can therefore be more “sensibly touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” But though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God! the divine nature still survives and raises the human! And we also shall be raised together with him, notwithstanding all our own fears and weaknesses; yea when we feel them most, we are often the nearest experiencing the power of God; for “he maketh his strength perfect in our weakness.” Most gladly therefore should we glory in our infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon us, for “when we are weak then are we strong.”



## DECEMBER 23.

*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.—1 JOHN iii. 21.*

WHEN we are living away from God, and in the love of the world, there is always a misgiving of the heart, which we cannot get the better of, knowing that it is written, "the love of the world is enmity with God," and the Holy Spirit also withholding his testimony from "our spirits that we are the children of God." But when God hath given us to chuse his favour in the first place, and made us willing to sacrifice anything rather than to lose it, to seek, in short, "his kingdom and righteousness" in the first place—then have we confidence towards God, and though our house be not so with the Lord as we could wish, yet does he give us to believe that he hath made an "everlasting covenant with us, ordered in all things and sure." He gives us to believe that we are his children, and feeling that we are such, we are moved with love toward the brethren, and whatever we ask of him we obtain; yea we have daily answers to our prayers, and we have constant communion with God. "He dwelleth in us, and we in him." We are made sensible of his presence and power, and are convinced by the testimony of his Spirit that we are acceptable to him.

## DECEMBER 24.

*For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

—GALATIANS II. 21.

THE death of Christ is the great subject of the gospel, and that on which all the apostles and prophets have dwelt with peculiar satisfaction. It included the highest act of obedience to the divine will, and therefore it was that for the suffering of death, he was crowned with glory and immortality on the behalf of his people. It includes also the subject matter of our justification, and we see how strenuous the apostle was in asserting this point even in opposition to Peter, because he was to be blamed—blamed for giving any countenance to a righteousness of works. That we are justified by faith indeed, without the works of the law, is a point that cannot be too often insisted upon, and a subject that cannot be too often presented to our own minds as matter of comfort and consolation amidst all the exercises of life. What should we do under all our temptations, if God had not provided for us a better righteousness than any that we can pretend to. It is by virtue of this righteousness that he gives strength to our souls, wherefore he saith, “I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,” that is, I will communicate strength to you in the belief of that righteousness, which is of faith, which I have provided for you, and which is peculiarly mine. I appointed it, I have wrought it out, and I alone can apply it. The holy and ever blessed Trinity are all concerned in this work of righteousness, the effect of which is quietness and assurance for ever. No wonder therefore, Paul should take such pains to defend this main citadel of the Christian religion. He knew that if a doctrine of works were introduced, even under the most frivolous pretence of personal purification, the death of Christ would be in vain.

## DECEMBER 25.

*Thy lovingkindness, is better than life.*—PSALM lxxiii. 3.

IT is the lovingkindness of the Lord that can alone make life desirable. Without this, its best enjoyments are empty and unsatisfactory. They leave a craving behind them, a dissatisfaction, and sense of their insufficiency to give us happiness. Much more do the sorrows of the world work death. But when the love of God in Christ once comes into the soul, and takes full possession of the heart by the power of the Spirit, we feel a satisfaction in all we do. The most indifferent things are sanctified to us, and all our enjoyments are doubled by a sense of his favour. Without this, life is but a dreary waste, and we, as forlorn travellers, are going we know not whither. But when the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the person of Christ shines into our hearts, then we see our way, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, in prospect of a happy eternity. Who can tell how great is his happiness, that lives in the continual sunshine of the divine favour, which he does, who lives in the constant apprehension of his acceptance in Christ, and trusts to nothing in himself to recommend him to God. Such shall have great joy and peace in believing.

## DECEMBER 26.

*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints—*

PSALM cxvi. 15.

THE Lord seems to have a peculiar care for his people in the article of death. He not only makes all their bed in their sickness, but attends upon them in the hour of death, and by his Spirit administers such strong consolation as overpowers the fear of death. There may be, and are indeed occasions, when this is not the case, but still it is generally vouchsafed to believers in their last moments to evidence the sincerity of their faith, and to express their certain hope of a joyful resurrection. And this, not for their own benefit, so much as for the comfort of survivors, and for the glory of God, that it may be known that God is faithful, and a very present help to all his people in all their distress. It is said of that host of believers recorded in the Hebrews, "These all died in faith." They not only lived by faith, but when they came to die, they found the same faith a very present help to them in the time of their trouble, seeing that their faith stood by the power of God. It was a faith of his operation, and therefore it was honoured in the hour of death, and served them in stead, like its divine author, when it was most needed. "Oh that we may die the death of the *righteous*, and that our latter end may be like his."

## DECEMBER 27.

*Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*—GALATIANS V. 26.

THERE is nothing productive of more uneasiness to ourselves, or of vexation to others, than the pursuits of ambition. For while we are seeking what others want, and wanting perhaps what others have attained, there cannot but be uneasiness on one side or the other. Hence come envyings and fightings amongst us, and after all, for matters of no consequence, while things of the utmost importance are neglected, or overlooked in the mean time, that one thing needful, which is, the hope of righteousness by faith. This is seeking that honour which cometh of God only. For in righteousness is included every good thing, "and him that honoureth me will I honour, saith the Lord." This is that true glory which is opposed to vain glory, and which it is our best interest, as well as our honour to pursue. Oh that our hearts were more sincere, and our eye more single in the pursuit of this honour, "for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also," and according to our esteem of things, will be our desires toward these. Pardon, O Lord, our self-seeking, and thus eventually subdue them.

## DECEMBER 28.

*Then were there brought unto him little children, that he might put his hands on them and pray.*—MATTHEW XIX. 13.

WHAT an interesting picture does this present of the character of our Lord, as the *intercessor* of his people, and when we consider that his prayers are in fact promises, that is, they imply a certainty of the blessing so prayed for, how ought we to value the privilege of “taking our children to Jesus, that he may lay his hands on them, and pray for them.” For we are not to suppose that this Scripture is of private interpretation any more than the other Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, or that our Lord is less willing now than he was in the days of his flesh to allow little children to be brought unto him, that he may lay his hands on them, and pray for them. He is an everlasting priesthood; his intercession is ever availing, because he ever liveth to make it. It is a continual office, to bless and pray for his people, and especially for such little children as are brought to him. “Suffer them, (says he) to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” They are the peculiar subjects of his kingdom. O let us therefore be careful not to deprive him of such subjects, if it were possible, by our neglects, but let us continually be presenting them to him for his blessing, which is life evermore. Let us intreat him to lay his hands on them, and pray for them. Even so, Amen.

## DECEMBER 29.

*When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream—Our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.—PSALM CXXVI. 1, 2.*

THERE is no joy like the joy of the Lord. It is true joy, and comes from the heart. It is also lasting joy—joy that shall remain. It lasts, because it is the joy of the Spirit who abides with us to testify of Jesus, and keep us in remembrance of those things which we have learned of him. It matters not how forgetful we may be by nature. When the Holy Ghost takes possession of our hearts, he will not suffer us any more to forget our lessons, nor to turn from Christ. He dwells with us, and shall abide with us for ever—He takes of the things which are Christ's, and shews them unto us, not in a way of mere display, but of actual fruition—He puts us into possession of them. He fills our heart with the same joy which Christ had upon earth, and still has in heaven. “Yea, he fills us with all joy and peace in believing,” so that we abound in hope for the future. We look forward to better and happier days than we have yet enjoyed, nor are we disappointed of our hope. For God giveth *more* grace. Wherefore he saith—“He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”



## DECEMBER 30.

*I will hear for I am gracious.—Exodus xxii. 27.*

THIS is spoken of persons who were in no condition to avenge themselves, the poorest of the poor, who had pledged their clothes for the day; so that it appears God is no respecter of persons, but that in every place he that serveth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. Let us take encouragement from this to believe that, as God hears the most considerable persons on the smallest matters of distress, he will not turn a deaf ear unto any that come unto him in the name of his Son to ask for spiritual benefits, and for such things as we know must be according to his will. For this is the will of God even our sanctification, and what is our sanctification, personally considered, but the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our hearts to make us both holy and happy. Let us come boldly, therefore, unto a throne of grace, remembering that he who sits upon it is gracious, and will certainly hear us. "For his eye is over the righteous, and his ear is open unto their prayers."—Neither let us avenge ourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord." Yea, however poor and oppressed the petitioner may be, yet the Lord hath promised, that he will hear him and avenge him speedily.



## DECEMBER 31.

*The length and breadth and height and depth.*—EPHESIANS iii. 18.

FAREWELL 1834 ! which adds another year to the records of mercy. For God is not slack concerning his promise, but long suffering to us ward, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” Every year, therefore, is a prolongation of the season of mercy, in which he calls us to repentance, not only for our own sins, but also for the sins of the people. And surely we have cause to be humbled for the little improvement we have made of the past year, as well as all preceding ones, and our little growth in grace, and in the knowledge of God our Saviour, of “the length, and breadth, and height, and depth” of his love. This is the great end of living, to grow in the knowledge of Christ, of his one offering, and all-sufficient righteousness—to gain more establishment in the belief of his love, and to learn to rest more implicitly on the word of his truth. Oh that every succeeding year may add to the experience of his faithfulness, and that we may have “an entrance administered to us more abundantly into the blessings of his kingdom,” that we may enjoy more “peace in believing,” and that God the Holy Ghost may dwell in our hearts more sensibly, to give us “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Christ”—“that we, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, may be changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

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